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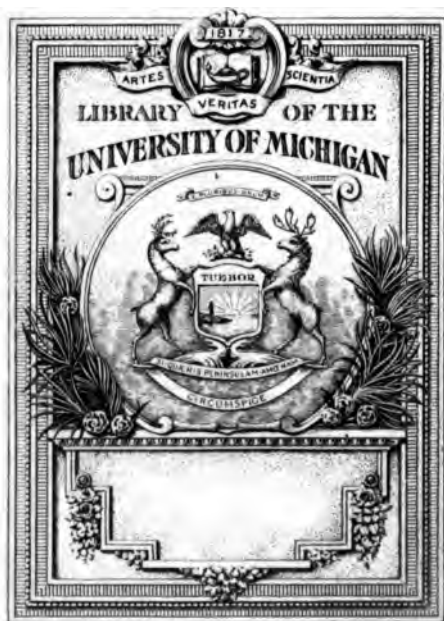
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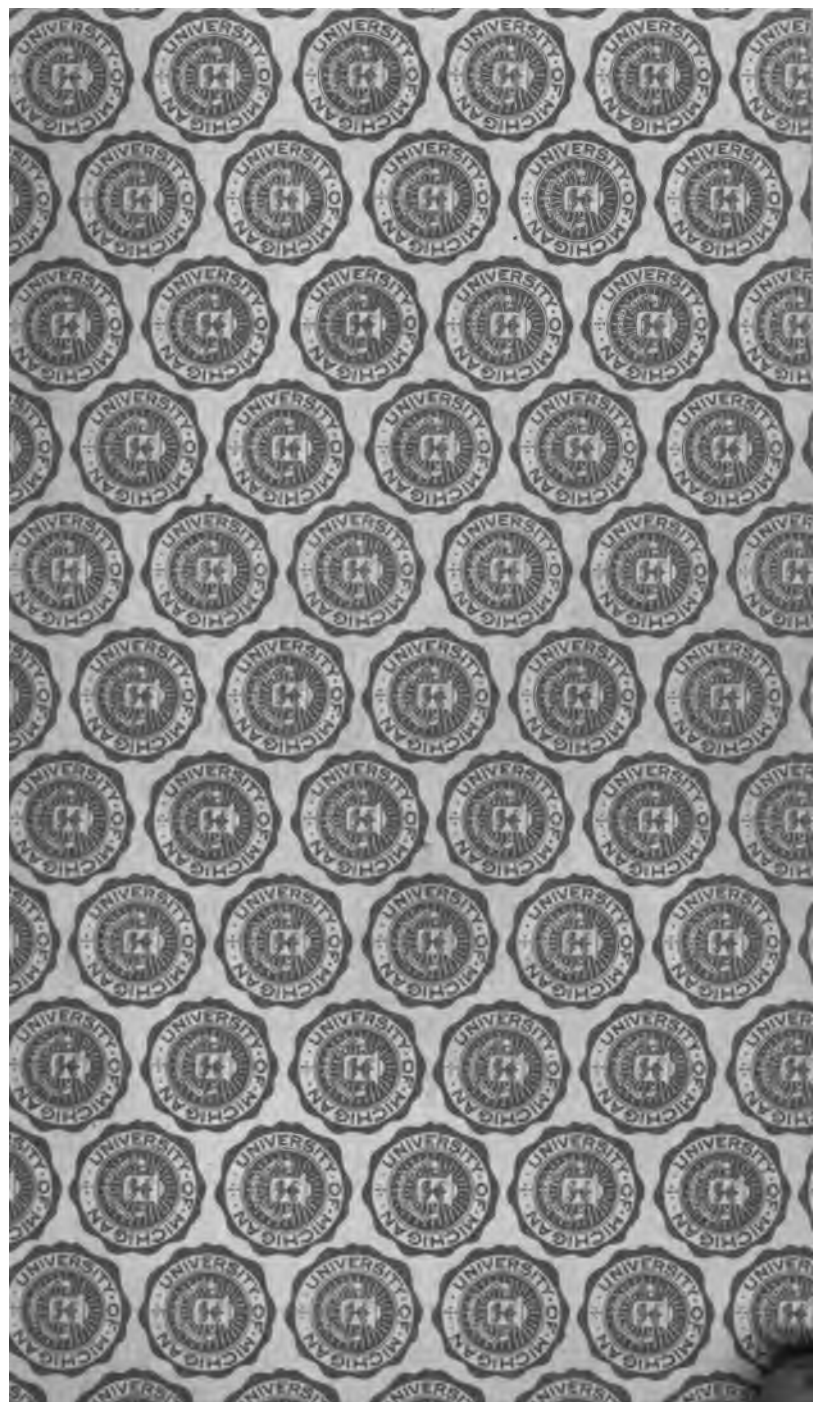
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THE  
COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
40706  
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

THE TEXT NEWLY COLLATED AND REVISED  
AND EDITED WITH A MEMOIR AND NOTES  
BY GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

**Centenary Edition**

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME II



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY  
*The Riverside Press, Cambridge*  
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*Rosalind and Helen* was published, together with other poems, in a thin volume, with Shelley's name, at London, in the spring of 1819, under the imprint of C. H. Reynell for C. & J. Ollier. The poem was begun at Marlow as early as the summer of 1817, and was sufficiently far advanced to lead Shelley to send copy to the publisher just before leaving England in March, 1818; it was finished, apparently, on Mary's request, in August, at the Baths of Lucca. Shelley's original *Advertisement* to the volume, dated Naples, December 20, 1818, opens with the following: —

“The story of *Rosalind and Helen* is, undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry. It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation; and if, by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awakens a certain ideal melancholy favorable to the reception of more important impressions, it will produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I wrote, to the impulse of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story; and this impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it.”

The remainder of the *Advertisement* is printed, in this edition, in the NOTES upon *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*.

# **SALIND AND HELEN**

**A MODERN ECLOGUE**



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## ROSALIND AND HELEN

ROSALIND, HELEN, and her Child.

SCENE. *The Shore of the Lake of Como.*

HELEN

COME hither, my sweet Rosalind.  
'Tis long since thou and I have met ;  
And yet methinks it were unkind  
Those moments to forget.  
Come, sit by me. I see thee stand  
By this lone lake, in this far land,  
Thy loose hair in the light wind flying,  
Thy sweet voice to each tone of even  
United, and thine eyes replying  
To the hues of yon fair heaven.  
Come, gentle friend ! wilt sit by me ?  
And be as thou wert wont to be  
Ere we were disunited ?  
None doth behold us now ; the power  
That led us forth at this lone hour  
Will be but ill requited  
If thou depart in scorn. Oh, come,  
And talk of our abandoned home !  
Remember, this is Italy,  
And we are exiles. Talk with me  
Of that our land, whose wilds and floods,  
Barren and dark although they be,  
Were dearer than these chestnut woods ;



Those heathy paths, that inland stream,  
And the blue mountains, shapes which seem  
Like wrecks of childhood's sunny dream ;  
Which that we have abandoned now,  
Weighs on the heart like that remorse  
Which altered friendship leaves. I seek  
No more our youthful intercourse.  
That cannot be ! Rosalind, speak,  
Speak to me ! Leave me not ! When morn did  
    come,  
When evening fell upon our common home,  
When for one hour we parted, — do not frown ;  
I would not chide thee, though thy faith is broken ;  
But turn to me. Oh ! by this cherished token  
Of woven hair, which thou wilt not disown,  
Turn, as 'twere but the memory of me,  
And not my scornèd self who prayed to thee !

## ROSALIND

Is it a dream, or do I see  
And hear frail Helen ? I would flee  
Thy tainting touch ; but former years  
Arise, and bring forbidden tears ;  
And my o'erburdened memory  
Seeks yet its lost repose in thee.  
I share thy crime. I cannot choose  
But weep for thee ; mine own strange grief  
But seldom stoops to such relief ;  
Nor ever did I love thee less,  
Though mourning o'er thy wickedness  
Even with a sister's woe. I knew  
What to the evil world is due,  
And therefore sternly did refuse

To link me with the infamy  
Of one so lost as Helen. Now,  
Bewildered by my dire despair,  
Wondering I blush, and weep that thou  
Shouldst love me still — thou only! — There,  
Let us sit on that gray stone  
Till our mournful talk be done.

## HELEN

Alas! not there; I cannot bear  
The murmur of this lake to hear.  
A sound from there, Rosalind dear,  
Which never yet I heard elsewhere  
But in our native land, recurs,  
Even here where now we meet. It stirs  
Too much of suffocating sorrow!  
In the dell of yon dark chestnut wood  
Is a stone seat, a solitude  
Less like our own. The ghost of peace  
Will not desert this spot. To-morrow,  
If thy kind feelings should not cease,  
We may sit here.

## ROSALIND

Thou lead, my sweet,  
And I will follow.

## HENRY

'Tis Fenici's seat  
Where you are going? This is not the way,  
Mamma; it leads behind those trees that  
grow  
Close to the little river.

HELEN

Yes, I know ;  
I was bewildered. Kiss me and be gay,  
Dear boy ; why do you sob ?

HENRY

I do not know ;  
But it might break any one's heart to see  
You and the lady cry so bitterly.

HELEN

It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home,  
Henry, and play with Lilla till I come.  
We only cried with joy to see each other ;  
We are quite merry now. Good night.

The boy

Lifted a sudden look upon his mother,  
And, in the gleam of forced and hollow joy  
Which lightened o'er her face, laughed with the  
glee  
Of light and unsuspecting infancy,  
And whispered in her ear, " Bring home with you  
That sweet strange lady-friend." Then off he flew,  
But stopped, and beckoned with a meaning smile,  
Where the road turned. Pale Rosalind the while,  
Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way  
Beneath the forest's solitude.  
It was a vast and antique wood,  
Through which they took their way ;

And the gray shades of evening  
O'er that green wilderness did fling  
Still deeper solitude.  
Pursuing still the path that wound  
The vast and knotted trees around,  
Through which slow shades were wandering,  
To a deep lawny dell they came,  
To a stone seat beside a spring,  
O'er which the columned wood did frame  
A roofless temple, like the fane  
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,  
Man's early race once knelt beneath  
The overhanging deity.  
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,  
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,  
The pale snake, that with eager breath  
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake,  
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,  
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,  
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood  
In the light of his own loveliness ;  
And the birds, that in the fountain dip  
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship  
Above and round him wheel and hover.  
The fitful wind is heard to stir  
One solitary leaf on high ;  
The chirping of the grasshopper  
Fills every pause. There is emotion  
In all that dwells at noontide here ;  
Then through the intricate wild wood  
A maze of life and light and motion  
Is woven. But there is stillness now —  
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now.

The snake is in his cave asleep ;  
The birds are on the branches dreaming ;  
Only the shadows creep ;  
Only the glow-worm is gleaming ;  
Only the owls and the nightingales  
Wake in this dell when daylight fails,  
And gray shades gather in the woods ;  
And the owls have all fled far away  
In a merrier glen to hoot and play,  
For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.  
The accustomed nightingale still broods  
On her accustomed bough,  
But she is mute ; for her false mate  
Has fled and left her desolate.

This silent spot tradition old  
Had peopled with the spectral dead.  
For the roots of the speaker's hair felt cold  
And stiff, as with tremulous lips he told  
That a hellish shape at midnight led  
The ghost of a youth with hoary hair,  
And sate on the seat beside him there,  
Till a naked child came wandering by,  
When the fiend would change to a lady fair !  
A fearful tale ! the truth was worse ;  
For here a sister and a brother  
Had solemnized a monstrous curse,  
Meeting in this fair solitude ;  
For beneath yon very sky,  
Had they resigned to one another  
Body and soul. The multitude,  
Tracking them to the secret wood,  
Tore limb from limb their innocent child,

And stabbed and trampled on its mother ;  
But the youth, for God's most holy grace,  
A priest saved to burn in the market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came  
To this lone silent spot,  
From the wrecks of a tale of wilder sorrow  
So much of sympathy to borrow  
As soothed her own dark lot.  
Duly each evening from her home,  
With her fair child would Helen come  
To sit upon that antique seat,  
While the hues of day were pale ;  
And the bright boy beside her feet  
Now lay, lifting at intervals  
His broad blue eyes on her ;  
Now, where some sudden impulse calls,  
Following. He was a gentle boy  
And in all gentle sports took joy.  
Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,  
With a small feather for a sail,  
His fancy on that spring would float,  
If some invisible breeze might stir  
Its marble calm ; and Helen smiled  
Through tears of awe on the gay child,  
To think that a boy as fair as he,  
In years which never more may be,  
By that same fount, in that same wood,  
The like sweet fancies had pursued ;  
And that a mother, lost like her,  
Had mournfully sate watching him.  
Then all the scene was wont to swim  
Through the mist of a burning tear.

For many months had Helen known  
This scene ; and now she thither turned  
Her footsteps, not alone.  
The friend whose falsehood she had mourned  
Sate with her on that seat of stone.  
Silent they sate ; for evening,  
And the power its glimpses bring,  
Had with one awful shadow quelled  
The passion of their grief. They sate  
With linkèd hands, for unrepelled  
Had Helen taken Rosalind's.  
Like the autumn wind, when it unbinds  
The tangled locks of the nightshade's hair  
Which is twined in the sultry summer air  
Round the walls of an outworn sepulchre,  
Did the voice of Helen, sad and sweet,  
And the sound of her heart that ever beat  
As with sighs and words she breathed on her,  
Unbind the knots of her friend's despair,  
Till her thoughts were free to float and flow ;  
And from her laboring bosom now,  
Like the bursting of a prisoned flame,  
The voice of a long-pent sorrow came.

## ROSALIND

I saw the dark earth fall upon  
The coffin ; and I saw the stone  
Laid over him whom this cold breast  
Had pillowed to his nightly rest !  
Thou knowest not, thou canst not know  
My agony. Oh ! I could not weep.  
The sources whence such blessings flow  
Were not to be approached by me !

But I could smile, and I could sleep,  
Though with a self-accusing heart.  
In morning's light, in evening's gloom,  
I watched — and would not thence depart —  
My husband's unlamented tomb.  
My children knew their sire was gone ;  
But when I told them, "He is dead,"  
They laughed aloud in frantic glee,  
They clapped their hands and leaped about,  
Answering each other's ecstasy  
With many a prank and merry shout.  
But I sate silent and alone,  
Wrapped in the mock of mourning weed.

They laughed, for he was dead ; but I  
Sate with a hard and tearless eye,  
And with a heart which would deny  
The secret joy it could not quell,  
Low muttering o'er his loathed name ;  
Till from that self-contention came  
Remorse where sin was none ; a hell  
Which in pure spirits should not dwell.

I'll tell thee truth. He was a man  
Hard, selfish, loving only gold,  
Yet full of guile ; his pale eyes ran  
With tears which each some falsehood told,  
And oft his smooth and bridled tongue  
Would give the lie to his flushing cheek ;  
He was a coward to the strong ;  
He was a tyrant to the weak,  
On whom his vengeance he would wreak ;  
For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,



From many a stranger's eye would dart,  
And on his memory cling, and follow  
His soul to its home so cold and hollow.  
He was a tyrant to the weak,  
And we were such, alas the day !  
Oft, when my little ones at play  
Were in youth's natural lightness gay,  
Or if they listened to some tale  
Of travellers, or of fairyland,  
When the light from the wood-fire's dying brand  
Flashed on their faces, — if they heard  
Or thought they heard upon the stair  
His footstep, the suspended word  
Died on my lips ; we all grew pale ;  
The babe at my bosom was hushed with fear  
If it thought it heard its father near ;  
And my two wild boys would near my knee  
Cling, cowed and cowering fearfully.

I'll tell thee truth : I loved another.  
His name in my ear was ever ringing,  
His form to my brain was ever clinging ;  
Yet, if some stranger breathed that name,  
My lips turned white, and my heart beat fast.  
My nights were once haunted by dreams of flame,  
My days were dim in the shadow cast  
By the memory of the same !  
Day and night, day and night,  
He was my breath and life and light,  
For three short years, which soon were passed.  
On the fourth, my gentle mother  
Led me to the shrine, to be

His sworn bride eternally.  
And now we stood on the altar stair,  
When my father came from a distant land,  
And with a loud and fearful cry  
Rushed between us suddenly.  
I saw the stream of his thin gray hair,  
I saw his lean and lifted hand,  
And heard his words — and live ! O God !  
Wherefore do I live ? — “ Hold, hold ! ”  
He cried, “ I tell thee ’tis her brother !  
Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod  
Of yon churchyard rests in her shroud so cold ;  
I am now weak, and pale, and old ;  
We were once dear to one another,  
I and that corpse ! Thou art our child ! ”  
Then with a laugh both long and wild  
The youth upon the pavement fell.  
They found him dead ! All looked on me,  
The spasms of my despair to see ;  
But I was calm. I went away ;  
I was clammy-cold like clay.  
I did not weep ; I did not speak ;  
But day by day, week after week,  
I walked about like a corpse alive.  
Alas ! sweet friend, you must believe  
This heart is stone — it did not break.

My father lived a little while,  
But all might see that he was dying,  
He smiled with such a woful smile.  
When he was in the churchyard lying  
Among the worms, we grew quite poor,  
So that no one would give us bread ;

My mother looked at me, and said  
Faint words of cheer, which only meant  
That she could die and be content ;  
So I went forth from the same church door  
To another husband's bed.  
And this was he who died at last,  
When weeks and months and years had passed,  
Through which I firmly did fulfil  
My duties, a devoted wife,  
With the stern step of vanquished will  
Walking beneath the night of life,  
Whose hours extinguished, like slow rain  
Falling forever, pain by pain.  
The very hope of death's dear rest ;  
Which, since the heart within my breast  
Of natural life was dispossessed,  
Its strange sustainer there had been.

When flowers were dead, and grass was green  
Upon my mother's grave — that mother  
Whom to outlive, and cheer, and make  
My wan eyes glitter for her sake,  
Was my vowed task, the single care  
Which once gave life to my despair —  
When she was a thing that did not stir,  
And the crawling worms were cradling her  
To a sleep more deep and so more sweet  
Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's knee,  
I lived ; a living pulse then beat  
Beneath my heart that awakened me.  
What was this pulse so warm and free ?  
Alas ! I knew it could not be  
My own dull blood. 'Twas like a thought

Of liquid love, that spread and wrought  
Under my bosom and in my brain,  
And crept with the blood through every vein ;  
And hour by hour, day after day,  
The wonder could not charm away  
But laid in sleep my wakeful pain,  
Until I knew it was a child,  
And then I wept. For long, long years  
These frozen eyes had shed no tears ;  
But now — 'twas the season fair and mild  
When April has wept itself to May ;  
I sate through the sweet sunny day  
By my window bowered round with leaves,  
And down my cheeks the quick tears ran  
Like twinkling rain-drops from the eaves,  
When warm spring showers are passing o'er.  
O Helen, none can ever tell  
The joy it was to weep once more !

I wept to think how hard it were  
To kill my babe, and take from it  
The sense of light, and the warm air,  
And my own fond and tender care,  
And love and smiles ; ere I knew yet  
That these for it might, as for me,  
Be the masks of a grinning mockery.  
And haply, I would dream, 'twere sweet  
To feed it from my faded breast,  
Or mark my own heart's restless beat  
Rock it to its untroubled rest,  
And watch the growing soul beneath  
Dawn in faint smiles ; and hear its breath,

.

386 ran || fell, Rossetti.

Half interrupted by calm sighs,  
And search the depth of its fair eyes  
For long departed memories !  
And so I lived till that sweet load  
Was lightened. Darkly forward flowed  
The stream of years, and on it bore  
Two shapes of gladness to my sight ;  
Two other babes, delightful more,  
In my lost soul's abandoned night,  
Than their own country ships may be  
Sailing towards wrecked mariners  
Who cling to the rock of a wintry sea.  
For each, as it came, brought soothing tears ;  
And a loosening warmth, as each one lay  
Sucking the sullen milk away,  
About my frozen heart did play,  
And weaned it, oh, how painfully —  
As they themselves were weaned each one.  
From that sweet food — even from the thirst  
Of death, and nothingness, and rest,  
Strange inmate of a living breast,  
Which all that I had undergone  
Of grief and shame, since she who first  
The gates of that dark refuge closed  
Came to my sight, and almost burst  
The seal of that Lethean spring —  
But these fair shadows interposed.  
For all delights are shadows now !  
And from my brain to my dull brow  
The heavy tears gather and flow.  
I cannot speak — oh, let me weep !

405 *Which* || *While*, Forman conj.408 *and* || *had*, Forman conj.

The tears which fell from her wan eyes  
Glimmered among the moonlight dew.  
Her deep hard sobs and heavy sighs  
Their echoes in the darkness threw.  
When she grew calm, she thus did keep  
The tenor of her tale : —

He died ;

I know not how ; he was not old,  
If age be numbered by its years ;  
But he was bowed and bent with fears,  
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,  
Which, like fierce fever, left him weak ;  
And his strait lip and bloated cheek  
Were warped in spasms by hollow sneers ;  
And selfish cares with barren plough,  
Not age, had lined his narrow brow,  
And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed  
Upon the withering life within,  
Like vipers on some poisonous weed.  
Whether his ill were death or sin  
None knew, until he died indeed,  
And then men owned they were the same.

Seven days within my chamber lay  
That corse, and my babes made holiday.  
At last, I told them what is death.  
The eldest, with a kind of shame,  
Came to my knees with silent breath,  
And sate awe-stricken at my feet ;  
And soon the others left their play,  
And sate there too. It is unmeet  
To shed on the brief flower of youth

The withering knowledge of the grave.  
From me remorse then wrung that truth.  
I could not bear the joy which gave  
Too just a response to mine own.  
In vain. I dared not feign a groan ;  
And in their artless looks I saw,  
Between the mists of fear and awe,  
That my own thought was theirs ; and they  
Expressed it not in words, but said,  
Each in its heart, how every day  
Will pass in happy work and play,  
Now he is dead and gone away !

After the funeral all our kin  
Assembled, and the will was read.  
My friend, I tell thee, even the dead  
Have strength, their putrid shrouds within,  
To blast and torture. Those who live  
Still fear the living, but a corse  
Is merciless, and Power doth give  
To such pale tyrants half the spoil  
He rends from those who groan and toil,  
Because they blush not with remorse  
Among their crawling worms. Behold,  
I have no child ! my tale grows old  
With grief, and staggers ; let it reach  
The limits of my feeble speech,  
And languidly at length recline  
On the brink of its own grave and mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty  
Among the fallen on evil days.  
'Tis Crime, and Fear, and Infamy,

And houseless Want in frozen ways  
Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,  
And, worse than all, that inward stain,  
Foul Self-contempt, which drowns in sneers  
Youth's star light smile, and makes its tears  
First like hot gall, then dry forever !  
And well thou knowest a mother never  
Could doom her children to this ill,  
And well he knew the same. The will  
Imported that, if e'er again  
I sought my children to behold,  
Or in my birthplace did remain  
Beyond three days, whose hours were told,  
They should inherit nought ; and he,  
To whom next came their patrimony,  
A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,  
Aye watched me, as the will was read,  
With eyes askance, which sought to see  
The secrets of my agony ;  
And with close lips and anxious brow  
Stood canvassing still to and fro  
The chance of my resolve, and all  
The dead man's caution just did call ;  
For in that killing lie 'twas said —  
" She is adulterous, and doth hold  
In secret that the Christian creed  
Is false, and therefore is much need  
That I should have a care to save  
My children from eternal fire."  
Friend, he was sheltered by the grave,  
And therefore dared to be a liar !  
In truth, the Indian on the pyre  
Of her dead husband, half consumed,



As well might there be false as I  
To those abhorred embraces doomed,  
Far worse than fire's brief agony.  
As to the Christian creed, if true  
Or false, I never questioned it ;  
I took it as the vulgar do ;  
Nor my vexed soul had leisure yet  
To doubt the things men say, or deem  
That they are other than they seem.

All present who those crimes did hear,  
In feigned or actual scorn and fear,  
Men, women, children, slunk away,  
Whispering with self-contented pride  
Which half suspects its own base lie.  
I spoke to none, nor did abide,  
But silently I went my way,  
Nor noticed I where joyously  
Sate my two younger babes at play  
In the court yard through which I passed ;  
But went with footsteps firm and fast  
Till I came to the brink of the ocean green,  
And there, a woman with gray hairs,  
Who had my mother's servant been,  
Kneeling, with many tears and prayers,  
Made me accept a purse of gold,  
Half of the earnings she had kept  
To refuge her when weak and old.

With woe, which never sleeps or slept,  
I wander now. 'Tis a vain thought —  
But on yon Alp, whose snowy head  
'Mid the azure air is islanded,

(We see it — o'er the flood of cloud,  
Which sunrise from its eastern caves  
Drives, wrinkling into golden waves,  
Hung with its precipices proud —  
From that gray stone where first we met)  
There — now who knows the dead feel nought? —  
Should be my grave; for he who yet  
Is my soul's soul once said: "'Twere sweet  
'Mid stars and lightnings to abide,  
And winds, and lulling snows that beat  
With their soft flakes the mountain wide,  
Where weary meteor lamps repose,  
And languid storms their pinions close,  
And all things strong and bright and pure,  
And ever during, aye endure.  
Who knows, if one were buried there,  
But these things might our spirits make,  
Amid the all-surrounding air,  
Their own eternity partake?"  
Then 'twas a wild and playful saying  
At which I laughed or seemed to laugh.  
They were his words — now heed my praying,  
And let them be my epitaph.  
Thy memory for a term may be  
My monument. Wilt remember me?  
I know thou wilt; and canst forgive,  
Whilst in this erring world to live  
My soul disdained not, that I thought  
Its lying forms were worthy aught,  
And much less thee.

HELEN

Oh, speak not so!

But come to me and pour thy woe

551 *Where* || *When*, Shelley, 1819.

Into this heart, full though it be,  
Aye overflowing with its own.  
I thought that grief had severed me  
From all beside who weep and groan,  
Its likeness upon earth to be —  
Its express image ; but thou art  
More wretched. Sweet, we will not part  
Henceforth, if death be not division ;  
If so, the dead feel no contrition.  
But wilt thou hear, since last we parted,  
All that has left me broken-hearted ?

ROSALIND

Yes, speak. The faintest stars are scarcely shorn  
Of their thin beams by that delusive morn  
Which sinks again in darkness, like the light  
Of early love, soon lost in total night.

HELEN

Alas ! Italian winds are mild,  
But my bosom is cold — wintry cold ;  
When the warm air weaves, among the fresh  
leaves,  
Soft music, my poor brain is wild,  
And I am weak like a nursling child,  
Though my soul with grief is gray and old.

ROSALIND

Weep not at thine own words, though they must  
make  
Me weep. What is thy tale ?

## HELEN

I fear 'twill shake  
Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou well  
Rememberest when we met no more ;  
And, though I dwelt with Lionel,  
That friendless caution pierced me sore  
With grief ; a wound my spirit bore  
Indignantly — but when he died,  
With him lay dead both hope and pride. /

Alas ! all hope is buried now.  
But then men dreamed the aged earth  
Was laboring in that mighty birth  
Which many a poet and a sage  
Has aye foreseen — the happy age  
When truth and love shall dwell below  
Among the works and ways of men ;  
Which on this world not power but will  
Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence befell  
Of strife, how vain, is known too well ;  
When Liberty's dear pæan fell  
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,  
Though of great wealth and lineage high,  
Yet through those dungeon walls there came  
Thy thrilling light, O Liberty !  
And as the meteor's midnight flame  
Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth  
Flashed on his visionary youth,  
And filled him, not with love, but faith,  
And hope, and courage mute in death ;

For love and life in him were twins,  
Born at one birth. In every other  
First life, then love, its course begins,  
Though they be children of one mother ;  
And so through this dark world they fleet  
Divided, till in death they meet ;  
But he loved all things ever. Then  
He passed amid the strife of men,  
And stood at the throne of armed power  
Pleading for a world of woe.  
Secure as one on a rock-built tower  
O'er the wrecks which the surge trails to and fro,  
'Mid the passions wild of humankind  
He stood, like a spirit calming them ;  
For, it was said, his words could bind  
Like music the lulled crowd, and stem  
That torrent of unquiet dream  
Which mortals truth and reason deem,  
But is revenge and fear and pride.  
Joyous he was ; and hope and peace  
On all who heard him did abide,  
Raining like dew from his sweet talk,  
As where the evening star may walk  
Along the brink of the gloomy seas,  
Liquid mists of splendor quiver.  
His very gestures touched to tears  
The unpersuaded tyrant, never  
So moved before ; his presence stung  
The torturers with their victim's pain,  
And none knew how ; and through their ears  
The subtle witchcraft of his tongue  
Unlocked the hearts of those who keep

650 *With their victim's pain the torturers, Fleay conj., Rossetti.*

Gold, the world's bond of slavery.  
Men wondered, and some sneered to see  
One sow what he could never reap ;  
For he is rich, they said, and young,  
And might drink from the depths of luxury.  
If he seeks fame, fame never crowned  
The champion of a trampled creed ;  
If he seeks power, power is enthroned  
'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to feed  
Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil  
Those who would sit near power must toil ;  
And such, there sitting, all may see.  
What seeks he? All that others seek  
He casts away, like a vile weed  
Which the sea casts unreturningly.  
That poor and hungry men should break  
The laws which wreak them toil and scorn  
We understand ; but Lionel,  
We know, is rich and nobly born.  
So wondered they ; yet all men loved  
Young Lionel, though few approved ;  
All but the priests, whose hatred fell  
Like the unseen blight of a smiling day,  
The withering honey-dew which clings  
Under the bright green buds of May  
Whilst they unfold their emerald wings ;  
For he made verses wild and queer  
On the strange creeds priests hold so dear  
Because they bring them land and gold.  
Of devils and saints and all such gear  
He made tales which whoso heard or read  
Would laugh till he were almost dead.  
So this grew a proverb : " Don't get old

Till Lionel's *Banquet in Hell* you hear,  
And then you will laugh yourself young again."  
So the priests hated him, and he  
Repaid their hate with cheerful glee.

Ah, smiles and joyance quickly died,  
For public hope grew pale and dim  
In an altered time and tide,  
And in its wasting withered him,  
As a summer flower that blows too soon  
Droops in the smile of the waning moon,  
When it scatters through an April night  
The frozen dews of wrinkling blight.  
None now hoped more. Gray Power was seated  
Safely on her ancestral throne ;  
And Faith, the Python, undefeated  
Even to its blood-stained steps dragged on  
Her foul and wounded train ; and men  
Were trampled and deceived again,  
And words and shows again could bind  
The wailing tribes of humankind  
In scorn and famine. Fire and blood  
Raged round the raging multitude,  
To fields remote by tyrants sent  
To be the scornèd instrument  
With which they drag from mines of gore  
The chains their slaves yet ever wore ;  
And in the streets men met each other,  
And by old altars and in halls,  
And smiled again at festivals.  
But each man found in his heart's brother  
Cold cheer ; for all, though half deceived,

711 *mines of gore* || *rivers of gore* or *mines of yore*, Rossetti conj.

The outworn creeds again believed,  
And the same round anew began  
Which the weary world yet ever ran.

Many then wept, not tears, but gall,  
Within their hearts, like drops which fall  
Wasting the fountain-stone away.  
And in that dark and evil day  
Did all desires and thoughts that claim  
Men's care — ambition, friendship, fame,  
Love, hope, though hope was now despair —  
Indue the colors of this change,  
As from the all-surrounding air  
The earth takes hues obscure and strange,  
When storm and earthquake linger there.

And so, my friend, it then befell  
To many, — most to Lionel,  
Whose hope was like the life of youth  
Within him, and when dead became  
A spirit of unresting flame,  
Which goaded him in his distress  
Over the world's vast wilderness.  
Three years he left his native land,  
And on the fourth, when he returned,  
None knew him ; he was stricken deep  
With some disease of mind, and turned  
Into aught unlike Lionel.  
On him — on whom, did he pause in sleep,  
Serenest smiles were wont to keep,  
And, did he wake, a wingèd band  
Of bright Persuasions, which had fed



On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,  
Kept their swift pinions half outspread  
To do on men his least command —  
On him, whom once 'twas paradise  
Even to behold, now misery lay.  
In his own heart 'twas merciless —  
To all things else none may express  
Its innocence and tenderness.

'Twas said that he had refuge sought  
In love from his unquiet thought  
In distant lands, and been deceived  
By some strange show ; for there were found,  
Blotted with tears — as those relieved  
By their own words are wont to do —  
These mournful verses on the ground,  
By all who read them blotted too.

“ How am I changed ! my hopes were once like fire ;  
I loved, and I believed that life was love.  
How am I lost ! on wings of swift desire  
Among Heaven's winds my spirit once did move.  
I slept, and silver dreams did aye inspire  
My liquid sleep ; I woke, and did approve  
All Nature to my heart, and thought to make  
A paradise of earth for one sweet sake.

“ I love, but I believe in love no more.  
I feel desire, but hope not. Oh, from sleep  
Most vainly must my weary brain implore  
Its long lost flattery now ! I wake to weep,  
And sit through the long day gnawing the core  
Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep —

752 *lay* || *weighed*, Rossetti conj.

Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure —  
To my own soul its self-consuming treasure.”

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He dwelt beside me near the sea ;  
And oft in evening did we meet,  
When the waves, beneath the starlight, flee  
O'er the yellow sands with silver feet,  
And talked. Our talk was sad and sweet,  
Till slowly from his mien there passed  
The desolation which it spoke ;  
And smiles — as when the lightning's blast  
Has parched some heaven-delighting oak,  
The next spring shows leaves pale and rare,  
But like flowers delicate and fair,  
On its rent boughs — again arrayed  
His countenance in tender light ;  
His words grew subtle fire, which made  
The air his hearers breathed delight ;  
His motions, like the winds, were free,  
Which bend the bright grass gracefully,  
Then fade away in circlets faint ;  
And wingèd Hope — on which upborne  
His soul seemed hovering in his eyes,  
Like some bright spirit newly born  
Floating amid the sunny skies —  
Sprang forth from his rent heart anew.  
Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and mien,  
Tempering their loveliness too keen,  
Past woe its shadow backward threw ;  
Till, like an exhalation spread  
From flowers half drunk with evening dew,  
They did become infectious — sweet  
And subtle mists of sense and thought,

Which wrapped us soon, when we might meet,  
Almost from our own looks and aught  
The wild world holds. And so his mind  
Was healed, while mine grew sick with fear ;  
For ever now his health declined,  
Like some frail bark which cannot bear  
The impulse of an altered wind,  
Though prosperous ; and my heart grew full,  
'Mid its new joy, of a new care ;  
For his cheek became, not pale, but fair,  
As rose-o'ershadowed lilies are ;  
And soon his deep and sunny hair,  
In this alone less beautiful,  
Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare.  
The blood in his translucent veins  
Beat, not like animal life, but love  
Seemed now its sullen springs to move,  
When life had failed, and all its pains ;  
And sudden sleep would seize him oft  
Like death, so calm, — but that a tear,  
His pointed eye-lashes between,  
Would gather in the light serene  
Of smiles whose lustre bright and soft  
Beneath lay undulating there.  
His breath was like inconstant flame  
As eagerly it went and came ;  
And I hung o'er him in his sleep,  
Till, like an image in the lake  
Which rains disturb, my tears would break  
The shadow of that slumber deep.  
Then he would bid me not to weep,  
And say, with flattery false yet sweet,  
That death and he could never meet,

If I would never part with him.  
And so we loved, and did unite  
All that in us was yet divided ;  
For when he said, that many a rite,  
By men to bind but once provided,  
Could not be shared by him and me,  
Or they would kill him in their glee,  
I shuddered, and then laughing said —  
“ We will have rites our faith to bind,  
But our church shall be the starry night,  
Our altar the grassy earth outspread,  
And our priest the muttering wind.”

’Twas sunset as I spoke. One star  
Had scarce burst forth, when from afar  
The ministers of misrule sent  
Seized upon Lionel, and bore  
His chained limbs to a dreary tower,  
In the midst of a city vast and wide.  
For he, they said, from his mind had bent  
Against their gods keen blasphemy,  
For which, though his soul must roasted be  
In hell’s red lakes immortally,  
Yet even on earth must he abide  
The vengeance of their slaves : a trial,  
I think, men call it. What avail  
Are prayers and tears, which chase denial  
From the fierce savage nursed in hate ?  
What the knit soul that pleading and pale  
Makes wan the quivering cheek which late  
It painted with its own delight ?  
We were divided. As I could,  
I stilled the tingling of my blood,

And followed him in their despite,  
As a widow follows, pale and wild,  
The murderers and corse of her only child ;  
And when we came to the prison door,  
And I prayed to share his dungeon floor  
With prayers which rarely have been spurned,  
And when men drove me forth, and I  
Stared with blank frenzy on the sky, —  
A farewell look of love he turned,  
Half calming me ; then gazed awhile,  
As if through that black and massy pile,  
And through the crowd around him there,  
And through the dense and murky air,  
And the thronged streets, he did espy  
What poets know and prophesy ;  
And said, with voice that made them shiver  
And clung like music in my brain,  
And which the mute walls spoke again  
Prolonging it with deepened strain —  
“ Fear not the tyrants shall rule forever,  
Or the priests of the bloody faith ;  
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,  
Whose waves they have tainted with death ;  
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,  
Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,  
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,  
Like wrecks, in the surge of eternity.”

I dwelt beside the prison gate ;  
And the strange crowd that out and in  
Passed, some, no doubt, with mine own fate,  
Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din,  
But the fever of care was louder within.

Soon but too late, in penitence  
Or fear, his foes released him thence.  
I saw his thin and languid form,  
As leaning on the jailor's arm,  
Whose hardened eyes grew moist the while  
To meet his mute and faded smile  
And hear his words of kind farewell,  
He tottered forth from his damp cell.  
Many had never wept before,  
From whom fast tears then gushed and fell;  
Many will relent no more,  
Who sobbed like infants then ; ay, all  
Who thronged the prison's stony hall,  
The rulers or the slaves of law,  
Felt with a new surprise and awe  
That they were human, till strong shame  
Made them again become the same.  
The prison bloodhounds, huge and grim,  
From human looks the infection caught,  
And fondly crouched and fawned on him ;  
And men have heard the prisoners say,  
Who in their rotting dungeons lay,  
That from that hour, throughout one day,  
The fierce despair and hate which kept  
Their trampled bosoms almost slept,  
Where, like twin vultures, they hung feeding  
On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding, —  
Because their jailors' rule, they thought,  
Grew merciful, like a parent's sway.

I know not how, but we were free ;  
And Lionel sate alone with me,

As the carriage drove through the streets apace ;  
And we looked upon each other's face ;  
And the blood in our fingers intertwined  
Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,  
As the swift emotions went and came  
Through the veins of each united frame.  
So through the long, long streets we passed  
Of the million-peopled City vast ;  
Which is that desert, where each one  
Seeks his mate yet is alone,  
Beloved and sought and mourned of none ;  
Until the clear blue sky was seen,  
And the grassy meadows bright and green.  
And then I sunk in his embrace  
Enclosing there a mighty space  
Of love ; and so we travelled on  
By woods, and fields of yellow flowers,  
And towns, and villages, and towers,  
Day after day of happy hours.  
It was the azure time of June,  
When the skies are deep in the stainless noon,  
And the warm and fitful breezes shake  
The fresh green leaves of the hedge-row briar ;  
And there were odors then to make  
The very breath we did respire  
A liquid element, whereon  
Our spirits, like delighted things  
That walk the air on subtle wings,  
Floated and mingled far away  
'Mid the warm winds of the sunny day.  
And when the evening star came forth  
Above the curve of the new bent moon,  
And light and sound ebbed from the earth,

Like the tide of the full and the weary sea  
To the depths of its own tranquillity,  
Our natures to its own repose  
Did the earth's breathless sleep attune ;  
Like flowers, which on each other close  
Their languid leaves when daylight 's gone,  
We lay, till new emotions came,  
Which seemed to make each mortal frame  
One soul of interwoven flame,  
A life in life, a second birth  
In worlds diviner far than earth ;—  
Which, like two strains of harmony  
That mingle in the silent sky,  
Then slowly disunite, passed by  
And left the tenderness of tears,  
A soft oblivion of all fears,  
A sweet sleep : — so we travelled on  
Till we came to the home of Lionel,  
Among the mountains wild and lone,  
Beside the hoary western sea,  
Which near the verge of the echoing shore  
The massy forest shadowed o'er.

The ancient steward with hair all hoar,  
As we alighted, wept to see  
His master changed so fearfully ;  
And the old man's sobs did waken me  
From my dream of unremaining gladness ;  
The truth flashed o'er me like quick madness  
When I looked, and saw that there was death  
On Lionel. Yet day by day  
He lived, till fear grew hope and faith,  
And in my soul I dared to say,



Nothing so bright can pass away ;  
Death is dark, and foul, and dull,  
But he is — oh, how beautiful !  
Yet day by day he grew more weak,  
And his sweet voice, when he might speak,  
Which ne'er was loud, became more low ;  
And the light which flashed through his waxen  
    cheek  
Grew faint, as the rose-like hues which flow  
From sunset o'er the Alpine snow ;  
And death seemed not like death in him,  
For the spirit of life o'er every limb  
Lingered, a mist of sense and thought.  
When the summer wind faint odors brought  
From mountain flowers, even as it passed,  
His cheek would change, as the noonday sea  
Which the dying breeze sweeps fitfully.  
If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,  
You might see his color come and go,  
And the softest strain of music made  
Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade  
Amid the dew of his tender eyes ;  
And the breath, with intermitting flow,  
Made his pale lips quiver and part.  
You might hear the beatings of his heart,  
Quick but not strong ; and with my tresses  
When oft he playfully would bind  
In the bowers of mossy lonelineses  
His neck, and win me so to mingle  
In the sweet depth of woven caresses,  
And our faint limbs were intertwined, —  
Alas ! the unquiet life did tingle  
    From mine own heart through every vein,

Like a captive in dreams of liberty,  
Who beats the walls of his stony cell.  
But his, it seemed already free,  
Like the shadow of fire surrounding me !  
On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell  
That spirit as it passed, till soon —  
As a frail cloud wandering o'er the moon,  
Beneath its light invisible,  
Is seen when it folds its gray wings again  
To alight on midnight's dusky plain —  
I lived and saw, and the gathering soul  
Passed from beneath that strong control,  
And I fell on a life which was sick with fear  
Of all the woe that now I bear.

Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,  
On a green and sea-girt promontory  
Not far from where we dwelt, there stood,  
In record of a sweet sad story,  
An altar and a temple bright  
Circled by steps, and o'er the gate  
Was sculptured, "To Fidelity ;"  
And in the shrine an image sate  
All veiled ; but there was seen the light  
Of smiles which faintly could express  
A mingled pain and tenderness  
Through that ethereal drapery.  
The left hand held the head, the right —  
Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,  
You might see the nerves quivering within —  
Was forcing the point of a barbèd dart  
Into its side-convulsing heart.  
An unskilled hand, yet one informed

With genius, had the marble warmed  
With that pathetic life. This tale  
It told : A dog had from the sea,  
When the tide was raging fearfully,  
Dragged Lionel's mother, weak and pale,  
Then died beside her on the sand,  
And she that temple thence had planned ;  
But it was Lionel's own hand  
Had wrought the image. Each new moon  
That lady did, in this lone fane,  
The rites of a religion sweet  
Whose god was in her heart and brain.  
The seasons' loveliest flowers were strewn  
On the marble floor beneath her feet,  
And she brought crowns of sea-buds white  
Whose odor is so sweet and faint,  
And weeds, like branching chrysolite,  
Woven in devices fine and quaint ;  
And tears from her brown eyes did stain  
The altar ; need but look upon  
That dying statue, fair and wan,  
If tears should cease, to weep again ;  
And rare Arabian odors came,  
Through the myrtle copses, steaming thence  
From the hissing frankincense,  
Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean foam,  
Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome —  
That ivory dome, whose azure night  
With golden stars, like heaven, was bright  
O'er the split cedar's pointed flame ;  
And the lady's harp would kindle there  
The melody of an old air,  
Softer than sleep ; the villagers

Mixed their religion up with hers,  
And, as they listened round, shed tears.

One eve he led me to this fane.  
Daylight on its last purple cloud  
Was lingering gray, and soon her strain  
The nightingale began ; now loud,  
Climbing in circles the windless sky,  
Now dying music ; suddenly  
'Tis scattered in a thousand notes ;  
And now to the hushed ear it floats  
Like field-smells known in infancy,  
Then, failing, soothes the air again.  
We sate within that temple lone,  
Pavilioned round with Parian stone ;  
His mother's harp stood near, and oft  
I had awakened music soft  
Amid its wires ; the nightingale  
Was pausing in her heaven-taught tale.  
" Now drain the cup," said Lionel,  
" Which the poet-bird has crowned so well  
With the wine of her bright and liquid song !  
Heard'st thou not sweet words among  
That heaven-resounding minstrelsy ?  
Heard'st thou not that those who die  
Awake in a world of ecstasy ?  
That love, when limbs are interwoven,  
And sleep, when the night of life is cloven,  
And thought, to the world's dim boundaries  
clinging,  
And music, when one beloved is singing,  
Is death ? Let us drain right joyously  
The cup which the sweet bird fills for me."

He paused, and to my lips he bent  
His own ; like spirit his words went  
Through all my limbs with the speed of fire ;  
And his keen eyes, glittering through mine,  
Filled me with the flame divine  
Which in their orbs was burning far,  
Like the light of an unmeasured star  
In the sky of midnight dark and deep ;  
Yes, 'twas his soul that did inspire  
Sounds which my skill could ne'er awaken ;  
And first, I felt my fingers sweep  
The harp, and a long quivering cry  
Burst from my lips in symphony ;  
The dusk and solid air was shaken,  
As swift and swifter the notes came  
From my touch, that wandered like quick flame,  
And from my bosom, laboring  
With some unutterable thing.  
The awful sound of my own voice made  
My faint lips tremble ; in some mood  
Of wordless thought Lionel stood  
So pale, that even beside his cheek  
The snowy column from its shade  
Caught whiteness ; yet his countenance,  
Raised upward, burned with radiance  
Of spirit-piercing joy whose light,  
Like the moon struggling through the night  
Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did break  
With beams that might not be confined.  
I paused, but soon his gestures kindled  
New power, as by the moving wind  
The waves are lifted ; and my song  
To low soft notes now changed and dwindled,

And, from the twinkling wires among,  
My languid fingers drew and flung  
Circles of life-dissolving sound,  
Yet faint; in æry rings they bound  
My Lionel, who, as every strain  
Grew fainter but more sweet, his mien  
Sunk with the sound relaxedly;  
And slowly now he turned to me,  
As slowly faded from his face  
That awful joy; with look serene  
He was soon drawn to my embrace,  
And my wild song then died away  
In murmurs; words I dare not say  
We mixed, and on his lips mine fed  
Till they methought felt still and cold.  
“What is it with thee, love?” I said;  
No word, no look, no motion! yes,  
There was a change, but spare to guess,  
Nor let that moment’s hope be told.  
I looked, — and knew that he was dead;  
And fell, as the eagle on the plain  
Falls when life deserts her brain,  
And the mortal lightning is veiled again.

Oh, that I were now dead! but such —  
Did they not, love, demand too much,  
Those dying murmurs? — he forbade.  
Oh, that I once again were mad!  
And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,  
For I would live to share thy woe.  
Sweet boy! did I forget thee too?

1168 *who*, omit, Rossetti.1173 *looks*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>l</sup>.

Alas, we know not what we do  
When we speak words.

No memory more  
Is in my mind of that sea-shore.  
Madness came on me, and a troop  
Of misty shapes did seem to sit  
Beside me, on a vessel's poop,  
And the clear north wind was driving it.  
Then I heard strange tongues, and saw strange  
flowers,  
And the stars methought grew unlike ours,  
And the azure sky and the stormless sea  
Made me believe that I had died  
And waked in a world which was to me  
Drear hell, though heaven to all beside.  
Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,  
Whilst animal life many long years  
Had rescued from a chasm of tears;  
And, when I woke, I wept to find  
That the same lady, bright and wise,  
With silver locks and quick brown eyes,  
The mother of my Lionel,  
Had tended me in my distress,  
And died some months before. Nor less  
Wonder, but far more peace and joy,  
Brought in that hour my lovely boy.  
For through that trance my soul had well  
The impress of thy being kept;  
And if I waked or if I slept,  
No doubt, though memory faithless be,

1208 *whilst* || *which*, Forman conj.

1209 *Had*, omit, Forman conj.

Thy image ever dwelt on me ;  
And thus, O Lionel, like thee  
Is our sweet child. 'Tis sure most strange  
I knew not of so great a change  
As that which gave him birth, who now  
Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left  
By will to me, and that of all  
The ready lies of law bereft  
My child and me, — might well befall.  
But let me think not of the scorn  
Which from the meanest I have borne,  
When, for my child's belovèd sake,  
I mixed with slaves, to vindicate  
The very laws themselves do make ;  
Let me not say scorn is my fate,  
Lest I be proud, suffering the same  
With those who live in deathless fame.

She ceased. — “ Lo, where red morning through the  
woods

Is burning o'er the dew ! ” said Rosalind.

And with these words they rose, and towards the  
flood

Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves, now wind  
With equal steps and fingers intertwined.

Thence to a lonely dwelling, where the shore

Is shadowed with steep rocks, and cypresses

Cleave with their dark green cones the silent  
skies

And with their shadows the clear depths below,



And where a little terrace from its bowers  
Of blooming myrtle and faint lemon flowers  
Scatters its sense-dissolving fragrance o'er  
The liquid marble of the windless lake ;  
And where the aged forest's limbs look hoar  
Under the leaves which their green garments make,  
They come. 'Tis Helen's home, and clean and  
white,

Like one which tyrants spare on our own land  
In some such solitude ; its casements bright  
Shone through their vine-leaves in the morning sun,  
And even within 'twas scarce like Italy.  
And when she saw how all things there were  
planned

As in an English home, dim memory  
Disturbed poor Rosalind ; she stood as one  
Whose mind is where his body cannot be,  
Till Helen led her where her child yet slept,  
And said, " Observe, that brow was Lionel's,  
Those lips were his, and so he ever kept  
One arm in sleep, pillowing his head with it.  
You cannot see his eyes — they are two wells  
Of liquid love. Let us not wake him yet."  
Rut Rosalind could bear no more, and wept  
A shower of burning tears which fell upon  
His face, and so his opening lashes shone  
With tears unlike his own, as he did leap  
In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together  
Thenceforth — changed in all else, yet friends again,  
Such as they were, when o'er the mountain heather  
They wandered in their youth through sun and rain.

And after many years, for human things  
Change even like the ocean and the wind,  
Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,  
And in their circle thence some visitings  
Of joy 'mid their new calm would intervene.  
A lovely child she was, of looks serene,  
And motions which o'er things indifferent shed  
The grace and gentleness from whence they came.  
And Helen's boy grew with her, and they fed  
From the same flowers of thought, until each mind  
Like springs which mingle in one flood became ;  
And in their union soon their parents saw  
The shadow of the peace denied to them.  
And Rosalind — for when the living stem  
Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall —  
Died ere her time ; and with deep grief and awe  
The pale survivors followed her remains  
Beyond the region of dissolving rains,  
Up the cold mountain she was wont to call  
Her tomb ; and on Chiavenna's precipice  
They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,  
Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun,  
Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun,  
The last, when it had sunk ; and through the  
    night  
The charioteers of Arctos wheelèd round  
Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,  
Whose sad inhabitants each year would come,  
With willing steps climbing that rugged height,  
And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound  
With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's  
    despite,  
Filled the froze air with unaccustomed light ;

Such flowers as in the wintry memory bloom  
Of one friend left adorned that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,  
Whose sufferings too were less, death slower led  
Into the peace of his dominion cold.  
She died among her kindred, being old.  
And know, that if love die not in the dead  
As in the living, none of mortal kind  
Are blessed as now Helen and Rosalind.

# JULIAN AND MADDALO

## A CONVERSATION

The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme,  
The goats with the green leaves of budding Spring,  
Are saturated not — nor Love with tears.

VIRGIL'S *Gallus*.

*Julian and Maddalo* was first published in Mrs. Shelley's edition of the *Posthumous Poems*, London, 1824. The poem was composed at Este, in the fall of 1818, after Shelley's first visit to Venice. It was originally intended to be published in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*; but this design was abandoned and Shelley sent it to Hunt, August 15, 1819, to be published, without his name, by Ollier. In May and December, 1820, and February, 1821, he wrote to Ollier about it, but without result. Mrs. Shelley's text, 1824, is modified by the MS. sent to Hunt, discovered by Mr. Townshend Mayer and minutely described by Forman in his edition. *Julian and Maddalo*, it is hardly necessary to remark, are Shelley and Byron, and the child, *Allegra*, Byron's daughter by Miss Clairemont.

## PREFACE

COUNT MADDALO is a Venetian nobleman of ancient family and of great fortune, who, without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, resides chiefly at his magnificent palace in that city. He is a person of the most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud. He derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men ; and, instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. His ambition preys upon itself, for want of objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentrated and impatient feelings which consume him ; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient and unassuming than Maddalo. He is cheerful, frank and witty. His more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication ; men are held by it as by a spell. He has travelled much ; and there is an inexpressible charm in his relation of his adventures in different countries.

Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to those philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be yet susceptible. Without concealing the evil in the world he is forever speculating how good may be made superior. He is a complete infidel and a scoffer at all things reputed holy ; and Maddalo takes a

wicked pleasure in drawing out his taunts against religion. What Maddalo thinks on these matters is not exactly known. Julian, in spite of his heterodox opinions, is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities. How far this is possible the pious reader will determine. Julian is rather serious.

Of the Maniac I can give no information. He seems, by his own account, to have been disappointed in love. He was evidently a very cultivated and amiable person when in his right senses. His story, told at length, might be like many other stories of the same kind. The unconnected exclamations of his agony will perhaps be found a sufficient comment for the text of every heart.

## JULIAN AND MADDALO

### A CONVERSATIO

I RODE one evening with Count Maddalo  
Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow  
Of Adria towards Venice. A bare strand  
Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand,  
Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,  
Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,  
Is this ; an uninhabited sea-side,  
Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,  
Abandons ; and no other object breaks  
The waste but one dwarf tree and some few stakes  
Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes  
A narrow space of level sand thereon,  
Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went  
down.

This ride was my delight. I love all waste  
And solitary places ; where we taste  
The pleasure of believing what we see  
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be ;  
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore  
More barren than its billows ; and yet more  
Than all, with a remembered friend I love  
To ride as then I rode ; — for the winds drove  
The living spray along the sunny air  
Into our faces ; the blue heavens were bare,  
Stripped to their depths by the awakening north ;



And from the waves sound like delight broke forth  
Harmonizing with solitude, and sent  
Into our hearts ærial merriment.

So, as we rode, we talked ; and the swift thought,  
Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,  
But flew from brain to brain, — such glee was  
ours,

Charged with light memories of remembered hours,  
None slow enough for sadness ; till we came  
Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.  
This day had been cheerful but cold, and now  
The sun was sinking, and the wind also.  
Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be  
Talk interrupted with such raillery  
As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn  
The thoughts it would extinguish. 'Twas forlorn,  
Yet pleasing ; such as once, so poets tell,  
The devils held within the dales of Hell,  
Concerning God, freewill and destiny ;  
Of all that earth has been, or yet may be,  
All that vain men imagine or believe,  
Or hope can paint, or suffering may achieve,  
We descanted ; and I (for ever still  
Is it not wise to make the best of ill ?)  
Argued against despondency, but pride  
Made my companion take the darker side.  
The sense that he was greater than his kind  
Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind  
By gazing on its own exceeding light.  
Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight,  
Over the horizon of the mountains. Oh,

45 *may*, Hunt MS. || *can*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

51 *struck* || *made*, Hunt MS. cancelled.

How beautiful is sunset, when the glow  
Of Heaven descends upon a land like thee,  
Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy !  
Thy mountains, seas and vineyards and the towers  
Of cities they encircle ! — It was ours  
To stand on thee, beholding it ; and then,  
Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men  
Were waiting for us with the gondola.  
As those who pause on some delightful way  
Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood  
Looking upon the evening, and the flood,  
Which lay between the city and the shore,  
Paved with the image of the sky. The hoar  
And æry Alps towards the north appeared,  
Through mist, an heaven-sustaining bulwark reared  
Between the east and west ; and half the sky  
Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry,  
Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew  
Down the steep west into a wondrous hue  
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent  
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent  
Among the many-folded hills. They were  
Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,  
As seen from Lido through the harbor piles,  
The likeness of a clump of peakèd isles ;  
And then, as if the earth and sea had been  
Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen  
Those mountains towering as from waves of flame  
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came  
The inmost purple spirit of light, and made  
Their very peaks transparent. "Ere it fade,"  
Said my companion, "I will show you soon  
A better station." So, o'er the lagoon

We glided ; and from that funereal bark  
I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark  
How from their many isles, in evening's gleam,  
Its temples and its palaces did seem  
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to Heaven.  
I was about to speak, when — “ We are even  
Now at the point I meant,” said Maddalo,  
And bade the gondolieri cease to row.  
“ Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well  
If you hear not a deep and heavy bell.”  
I looked, and saw between us and the sun  
A building on an island, — such a one  
As age to age might add, for uses vile,  
A windowless, deformed and dreary pile ;  
And on the top an open tower, where hung  
A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung ;  
We could just hear its hoarse and iron tongue ;  
The broad sun sunk behind it, and it tolled  
In strong and black relief. “ What we behold  
Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,”  
Said Maddalo ; “ and ever at this hour  
Those who may cross the water hear that bell,  
Which calls the maniacs each one from his cell  
To vespers.” — “ As much skill as need to pray  
In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they  
To their stern Maker,” I replied. “ O ho !  
You talk as in years past,” said Maddalo.  
“ 'Tis strange men change not. You were ever still  
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,  
A wolf for the meek lambs — if you can't swim,

99 *a*, Hunt MS. || *an*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

105 *sunk*, Hunt MS. || *sank*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

108 *ever*, Hunt MS. || *even*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

Beware of Providence." I looked on him,  
But the gay smile had faded in his eye, —  
"And such," he cried, "is our mortality;  
And this must be the emblem and the sign  
Of what should be eternal and divine!  
And, like that black and dreary bell, the soul,  
Hung in a heaven-illumined tower, must toll  
Our thoughts and our desires to meet below  
Round the rent heart and pray — as madmen do  
For what? they know not, till the night of death,  
As sunset that strange vision, severeth  
Our memory from itself, and us from all  
We sought, and yet were baffled." I recall  
The sense of what he said, although I mar  
The force of his expressions. The broad star  
Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill,  
And the black bell became invisible,  
And the red tower looked gray, and all between,  
The churches, ships and palaces were seen  
Huddled in gloom; into the purple sea  
The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.  
We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola  
Conveyed me to my lodgings by the way.

The following morn was rainy, cold, and dim.  
Ere Maddalo arose, I called on him,  
And whilst I waited, with his child I played.  
A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made;  
A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being,  
Graceful without design, and unforeseeing,  
With eyes — oh, speak not of her eyes! — which  
seem

119 in, Hunt MS. || *from*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

140 lodgings, Hunt MS. || *lodging*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

Twin mirrors of Italian heaven, yet gleam  
With such deep meaning as we never see  
But in the human countenance. With me  
She was a special favorite ; I had nursed  
Her fine and feeble limbs when she came first  
To this bleak world ; and she yet seemed to know  
On second sight her ancient playfellow,  
Less changed than she was by six months or so ;  
For, after her first shyness was worn out,  
We sate there, rolling billiard balls about,  
When the Count entered. Salutations past —  
“ The words you spoke last night might well have  
cast

A darkness on my spirit. If man be  
The passive thing you say, I should not see  
Much harm in the religions and old saws,  
(Though I may never own such leaden laws)  
Which break a teachless nature to the yoke.  
Mine is another faith.” Thus much I spoke,  
And noting he replied not, added : “ See  
This lovely child, blithe, innocent and free ;  
She spends a happy time with little care,  
While we to such sick thoughts subjected are  
As came on you last night. It is our will  
That thus enchains us to permitted ill.  
We might be otherwise ; we might be all  
We dream of happy, high, majestic.  
Where is the love, beauty and truth we seek,  
But in our mind ? and if we were not weak,  
Should we be less in deed than in desire ? ”

170 *As came on you* || *As you described*, Hunt MS. cancelled.

171 *That*, Hunt MS. || *Which*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

175 *mind*, Hunt MS. || *minds*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

“ Ay, if we were not weak — and we aspire  
How vainly to be strong !” said Maddalo ;  
“ You talk Utopia.” “ It remains to know,”  
I then rejoined, “ and those who try may find  
How strong the chains are which our spirit bind ;  
Brittle perchance as straw. We are assured  
Much may be conquered, much may be endured  
Of what degrades and crushes us. We know  
That we have power over ourselves to do  
And suffer — what, we know not till we try ;  
But something nobler than to live and die.  
So taught those kings of old philosophy,  
Who reigned before religion made men blind ;  
And those who suffer with their suffering kind  
Yet feel this faith religion.” “ My dear friend,”  
Said Maddalo, “ my judgment will not bend  
To your opinion, though I think you might  
Make such a system refutation-tight  
As far as words go. I knew one like you,  
Who to this city came some months ago,  
With whom I argued in this sort, and he  
Is now gone mad, — and so he answered me, —  
Poor fellow ! but if you would like to go,  
We’ll visit him, and his wild talk will show  
How vain are such aspiring theories.”  
“ I hope to prove the induction otherwise,  
And that a want of that true theory still,  
Which seeks ‘ a soul of goodness ’ in things ill,  
Or in himself or others, has thus bowed

177 *if we were*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *if were*, Hunt MS.

179 *know*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *see*, Hunt MS.

188 *those*, Hunt MS. || *the*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

191 *this*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *their*, Hunt MS.

His being. There are some by nature proud,  
Who patient in all else demand but this —  
To love and be beloved with gentleness;  
And, being scorned, what wonder if they die  
Some living death? this is not destiny  
But man's own wilful ill."

As thus I spoke,

Servants announced the gondola, and we  
Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea  
Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands.  
We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands,  
Fierce yells and howlings and lamentings keen,  
And laughter where complaint had merrier been,  
Moans, shrieks, and curses, and blaspheming  
prayers,  
Accosted us. We climbed the oozy stairs  
Into an old courtyard. I heard on high,  
Then, fragments of most touching melody,  
But looking up saw not the singer there.  
Through the black bars in the tempestuous air  
I saw, like weeds on a wrecked palace growing,  
Long tangled locks flung wildly forth, and flowing,  
Of those who on a sudden were beguiled  
Into strange silence, and looked forth and smiled  
Hearing sweet sounds. Then I: "Methinks there  
were  
A cure of these with patience and kind care,  
If music can thus move. But what is he,  
Whom we seek here?" "Of his sad history  
I know but this," said Maddalo: "he came  
To Venice a dejected man, and fame

Said he was wealthy, or he had been so.  
Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him  
    woe ;

But he was ever talking in such sort  
As you do — far more sadly ; he seemed hurt,  
Even as a man with his peculiar wrong,  
To hear but of the oppression of the strong,  
Or those absurd deceits (I think with you  
In some respects, you know) which carry through  
The excellent impostors of this earth  
When they outface detection. He had worth,  
Poor fellow ! but a humorist in his way.”  
“ Alas, what drove him mad ? ” “ I cannot say ;  
A lady came with him from France, and when  
She left him and returned, he wandered then  
About yon lonely isles of desert sand  
Till he grew wild. He had no cash or land  
Remaining ; the police had brought him here ;  
Some fancy took him and he would not bear  
Removal ; so I fitted up for him  
Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim,  
And sent him busts and books and urns for  
    flowers,  
Which had adorned his life in happier hours,  
And instruments of music. You may guess  
A stranger could do little more or less  
For one so gentle and unfortunate ;  
And those are his sweet strains which charm the  
    weight

From madmen’s chains, and make this Hell appear  
A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear.”

“ Nay, this was kind of you ; he had no claim,



As the world says." "None — but the very same  
Which I on all mankind, were I as he  
Fallen to such deep reverse. His melody  
Is interrupted ; now we hear the din  
Of madmen, shriek on shriek, again begin.  
Let us now visit him ; after this strain  
He ever communes with himself again,  
And sees nor hears not any." Having said  
These words, we called the keeper, and he led  
To an apartment opening on the sea.  
There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully  
Near a piano, his pale fingers twined  
One with the other, and the ooze and wind  
Rushed through an open casement, and did sway  
His hair, and starred it with the brackish spray ;  
His head was leaning on a music-book,  
And he was muttering, and his lean limbs shook ;  
His lips were pressed against a folded leaf,  
In hue too beautiful for health, and grief  
Smiled in their motions as they lay apart.  
As one who wrought from his own fervid heart  
The eloquence of passion, soon he raised  
His sad meek face, and eyes lustrous and glazed,  
And spoke — sometimes as one who wrote, and  
thought  
His words might move some heart that heeded not,  
If sent to distant lands ; and then as one  
Reproaching deeds never to be undone  
With wondering self-compassion ; then his speech  
Was lost in grief, and then his words came each  
Unmodulated, cold, expressionless,

270 *nor*, Hunt MS. || *and*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.292 *cold*, Hunt MS. || *and*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

But that from one jarred accent you might guess  
It was despair made them so uniform ;  
And all the while the loud and gusty storm  
Hissed through the window, and we stood behind  
Stealing his accents from the envious wind  
Unseen. I yet remember what he said  
Distinctly ; such impression his words made.

“ Month after month,” he cried, “ to bear this load,  
And, as a jade urged by the whip and goad,  
To drag life on — which like a heavy chain  
Lengthens behind with many a link of pain ! —  
And not to speak my grief — oh, not to dare  
To give a human voice to my despair,  
But live, and move, and, wretched thing ! smile on  
As if I never went aside to groan ;  
And wear this mask of falsehood even to those  
Who are most dear — not for my own repose —  
Alas, no scorn or pain or hate could be  
So heavy as that falsehood is to me !  
But that I cannot bear more altered faces  
Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,  
More misery, disappointment and mistrust  
To own me for their father. Would the dust  
Were covered in upon my body now !  
That the life ceased to toil within my brow !  
And then these thoughts would at the least be fled ;  
Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

“ What Power delights to torture us ? I know  
That to myself I do not wholly owe

What now I suffer, though in part I may.  
Alas! none strewed sweet flowers upon the way  
Where, wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain,  
My shadow, which will leave me not again.  
If I have erred, there was no joy in error,  
But pain and insult and unrest and terror ;  
I have not, as some do, bought penitence  
With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence ;  
For then — if love and tenderness and truth  
Had overlived hope's momentary youth,  
My creed should have redeemed me from repent-  
ing ;  
But loathèd scorn and outrage unrelenting  
Met love excited by far other seeming  
Until the end was gained ; as one from dreaming  
Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state  
Such as it is —

“ O Thou, my spirit's mate !  
Who, for thou art compassionate and wise,  
Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes  
If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see —  
My secret groans must be unheard by thee ;  
Thou wouldst weep tears bitter as blood to know  
Thy lost friend's incommunicable woe.

“ Ye few by whom my nature has been weighed  
In friendship, let me not that name degrade  
By placing on your hearts the secret load  
Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road  
To peace, and that is truth, which follow ye !  
Love sometimes leads astray to misery.

Yet think not, though subdued — and I may well  
Say that I am subdued — that the full hell  
Within me would infect the untainted breast  
Of sacred Nature with its own unrest ;  
As some perverted beings think to find  
In scorn or hate a medicine for the mind  
Which scorn or hate have wounded — oh, how  
vain !

The dagger heals not, but may rend again !  
Believe that I am ever still the same  
In creed as in resolve ; and what may tame  
My heart must leave the understanding free,  
Or all would sink in this keen agony ;  
Nor dream that I will join the vulgar cry ;  
Or with my silence sanction tyranny ;  
Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain  
In any madness which the world calls gain,  
Ambition or revenge or thoughts as stern  
As those which make me what I am ; or turn  
To avarice or misanthropy or lust.  
Heap on me soon, O grave, thy welcome dust !  
Till then the dungeon may demand its prey,  
And Poverty and Shame may meet and say,  
Halting beside me on the public way,  
'That love-devoted youth is ours ; let's sit  
Beside him ; he may live some six months yet.'  
Or the red scaffold, as our country bends,  
May ask some willing victim ; or ye, friends,  
May fall under some sorrow, which this heart

351 *full* || *deep*, Hunt MS. cancelled.

356 *have*, Hunt MS. || *hath*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

361 *in this keen*, Hunt MS. || *under this*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

362 *cry*, Hunt MS. || *eye*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

372 *on*, Hunt MS. || *in*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

Or hand may share or vanquish or avert ;  
 I am prepared — in truth, with no proud joy,  
 To do or suffer aught, as when a boy  
 I did devote to justice and to love  
 My nature, worthless now ! —

“ I must remove  
 A veil from my pent mind. ’Tis torn aside !  
 O pallid as Death’s dedicated bride,  
 Thou mockery which art sitting by my side,  
 Am I not wan like thee ? at the grave’s call  
 I haste, invited to thy wedding-ball,  
 To greet the ghastly paramour for whom  
 Thou hast deserted me — and made the tomb  
 Thy bridal bed — but I beside your feet  
 Will lie and watch ye from my winding-sheet —  
 Thus — wide-awake though dead — yet stay, oh,  
 stay !

Go not so soon — I know not what I say —  
 Hear but my reasons — I am mad, I fear,  
 My fancy is o’erwrought — thou art not here ;  
 Pale art thou, ’tis most true — but thou art gone,  
 Thy work is finished — I am left alone.

“ Nay, was it I who wooed thee to this breast,  
 Which like a serpent thou envenomest  
 As in repayment of the warmth it lent ?  
 Didst thou not seek me for thine own content ?  
 Did not thy love awaken mine ? I thought  
 That thou wert she who said ‘ You kiss me not  
 Ever ; I fear you do not love me now —

388 *greet*, Hunt MS. || *meet*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

390 *your*, Hunt MS. || *thy*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

In truth I loved even to my overthrow  
Her who would fain forget these words ; but they  
Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away.

“ You say that I am proud — that when I speak  
My lip is tortured with the wrongs which break  
The spirit it expresses. — Never one  
Humbled himself before, as I have done !  
Even the instinctive worm on which we tread  
Turns, though it wound not — then with prostrate  
head

Sinks in the dust and writhes like me — and dies ?  
No : wears a living death of agonies !  
As the slow shadows of the pointed grass  
Mark the eternal periods, his pangs pass,  
Slow, ever-moving, making moments be  
As mine seem, — each an immortality !

“ That you had never seen me — never heard  
My voice, and more than all had ne’er endured  
The deep pollution of my loathed embrace —  
That your eyes ne’er had lied love in my face —  
That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out  
The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root  
With mine own quivering fingers, so that ne’er  
Our hearts had for a moment mingled there  
To disunite in horror — these were not  
With thee like some suppressed and hideous  
thought

Which flits athwart our musings but can find  
No rest within a pure and gentle mind ;  
Thou sealedst them with many a bare broad word,

And sear'dst my memory o'er them, — for I heard  
 And can forget not ; — they were ministered  
 One after one, those curses. Mix them up  
 Like self-destroying poisons in one cup,  
 And they will make one blessing, which thou ne'er  
 Didst imprecate for on me, — death.

. . . . .

“ It were

A cruel punishment for one most cruel,  
 If such can love, to make that love the fuel  
 Of the mind's hell — hate, scorn, remorse, despair ;  
 But *me*, whose heart a stranger's tear might wear  
 As water-drops the sandy fountain-stone,  
 Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan  
 For woes which others hear not, and could see  
 The absent with the glance of fantasy,  
 And with the poor and trampled sit and weep,  
 Following the captive to his dungeon deep ;  
*Me* — who am as a nerve o'er which do creep  
 The else unfelt oppressions of this earth,  
 And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth,  
 When all beside was cold : — that thou on me  
 Shouldst rain these plagues of blistering agony !  
 Such curses are from lips once eloquent  
 With love's too partial praise ! Let none relent  
 Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name  
 Henceforth, if an example for the same  
 They seek : — for thou on me look'dst so, and so —  
 And didst speak thus — and thus. I live to show  
 How much men bear and die not !

. . . . .

446 *glance*, Hunt MS. || *glass*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

447 *with*, Hunt MS. || *near*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

“Thou wilt tell

With the grimace of hate how horrible  
It was to meet my love when thine grew less ;  
Thou wilt admire how I could e'er address  
Such features to love's work. This taunt, though  
true,

(For indeed Nature nor in form nor hue  
Bestowed on me her choicest workmanship)  
Shall not be thy defence; for since thy lip  
Met mine first, years long past, — since thine eye  
kindled

With soft fire under mine, — I have not dwindled,  
Nor changed in mind or body, or in aught  
But as love changes what it loveth not  
After long years and many trials.

“How vain

Are words ! I thought never to speak again,  
Not even in secret, not to mine own heart;  
But from my lips the unwilling accents start,  
And from my pen the words flow as I write,  
Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears ; my sight  
Is dim to see that charactered in vain  
On this unfeeling leaf, which burns the brain  
And eats into it, blotting all things fair  
And wise and good which time had written there.

Those who inflict must suffer, for they see  
The work of their own hearts, and this must be  
Our chastisement or recompense. — O child !  
I would that thine were like to be more mild

467 *lip*, Hunt MS. || *life*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

483 *this*, Hunt MS. || *that*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.



For both our wretched sakes, — for thine the most  
 Who feelest already all that thou hast lost  
 Without the power to wish it thine again ;  
 And as slow years pass, a funereal train,  
 Each with the ghost of some lost hope or friend  
 Following it like its shadow, wilt thou bend  
 No thought on my dead memory ?

“ Alas, love !

Fear me not — against thee I would not move  
 A finger in despite. Do I not live  
 That thou mayst have less bitter cause to grieve ?  
 I give thee tears for scorn, and love for hate ;  
 And that thy lot may be less desolate  
 Than his on whom thou tramplest, I refrain  
 From that sweet sleep which medicines all pain.  
 Then, when thou speakest of me, never say  
 ‘ He could forgive not.’ Here I cast away  
 All human passions, all revenge, all pride ;  
 I think, speak, act no ill ; I do but hide  
 Under these words, like embers, every spark  
 Of that which has consumed me. Quick and dark  
 The grave is yawning — as its roof shall cover  
 My limbs with dust and worms under and over,  
 So let Oblivion hide this grief — the air  
 Closes upon my accents as despair  
 Upon my heart — let death upon despair ! ”

He ceased, and overcome leant back awhile ;  
 Then rising, with a melancholy smile,

490 *lost* || *dead*, Hunt MS. cancelled.

493 *I would*, Hunt MS. || *I'd*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

510 *despair*, Hunt MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *my care*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>2</sup>.

Went to a sofa, and lay down, and slept  
A heavy sleep, and in his dreams he wept,  
And muttered some familiar name, and we  
Wept without shame in his society.  
I think I never was impressed so much ;  
The man who were not must have lacked a  
touch

Of human nature. — Then we lingered not,  
Although our argument was quite forgot ;  
But, calling the attendants, went to dine  
At Maddalo's ; yet neither cheer nor wine  
Could give us spirits, for we talked of him  
And nothing else, till daylight made stars dim ;  
And we agreed his was some dreadful ill  
Wrought on him boldly, yet unspeakable,  
By a dear friend ; some deadly change in love  
Of one vowed deeply, which he dreamed not of ;  
For whose sake he, it seemed, had fixed a blot  
Of falsehood on his mind which flourished not  
But in the light of all-beholding truth ;  
And having stamped this canker on his youth  
She had abandoned him — and how much more  
Might be his woe, we guessed not ; he had store  
Of friends and fortune once, as we could guess  
From his nice habits and his gentleness ;  
These were now lost — it were a grief indeed  
If he had changed one unsustaining reed  
For all that such a man might else adorn.  
The colors of his mind seemed yet unworn ;

518 *were*, Hunt MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *was*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

525 *his*, Hunt MS. || *it*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

530 *on*, Hunt MS. || *in*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

537 *were now*, Hunt MS. || *now were*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

For the wild language of his grief was high —  
Such as in measure were called poetry.  
And I remember one remark which then  
Maddalo made. He said — “ Most wretched men  
Are cradled into poetry by wrong ;  
They learn in suffering what they teach in song.”

If I had been an unconnected man,  
I, from this moment, should have formed some plan  
Never to leave sweet Venice, — for to me  
It was delight to ride by the lone sea ;  
And then the town is silent — one may write  
Or read in gondolas by day or night,  
Having the little brazen lamp alight,  
Unseen, uninterrupted ; books are there,  
Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair  
Which were twin-born with poetry, and all  
We seek in towns, with little to recall  
Regrets for the green country. I might sit  
In Maddalo's great palace, and his wit  
And subtle talk would cheer the winter night  
And make me know myself, and the firelight  
Would flash upon our faces, till the day  
Might dawn and make me wonder at my stay.  
But I had friends in London too. The chief  
Attraction here was that I sought relief  
From the deep tenderness that maniac wrought  
Within me — 'twas perhaps an idle thought,  
But I imagined that if day by day  
I watched him, and but seldom went away,  
And studied all the beatings of his heart

558 *regrets*, Hunt MS. || *regret*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

569 *but*, Hunt MS. || *omit*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

With zeal, as men study some stubborn art  
For their own good, and could by patience find  
An entrance to the caverns of his mind,  
I might reclaim him from this dark estate.  
In friendships I had been most fortunate,  
Yet never saw I one whom I would call  
More willingly my friend ; and this was all  
Accomplished not ; such dreams of baseless good  
Oft come and go in crowds and solitude  
And leave no trace, — but what I now designed  
Made, for long years, impression on my mind.  
The following morning, urged by my affairs,  
I left bright Venice.

After many years,  
And many changes, I returned ; the name  
Of Venice, and its aspect, was the same ;  
But Maddalo was travelling far away  
Among the mountains of Armenia.  
His dog was dead. His child had now become  
A woman ; such as it has been my doom  
To meet with few, a wonder of this earth,  
Where there is little of transcendent worth,  
Like one of Shakespeare's women. Kindly she,  
And with a manner beyond courtesy,  
Received her father's friend ; and, when I asked  
Of the lorn maniac, she her memory tasked,  
And told, as she had heard, the mournful tale :  
" That the poor sufferer's health began to fail  
Two years from my departure, but that then

574 *this*, Hunt MS. || *his*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

579 *crowds and*, Hunt MS. || *or*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

584 *changes*, || *wanderings*, Hunt MS. cancelled.

The lady, who had left him, came again.  
Her mien had been imperious, but she now  
Looked meek — perhaps remorse had brought her  
low.

Her coming made him better, and they stayed  
Together at my father's — for I played  
As I remember with the lady's shawl ;  
I might be six years old — but after all  
She left him." " Why, her heart must have been  
tough.

How did it end ?" " And was not this enough ?  
They met — they parted." " Child, is there no  
more ?"

" Something within that interval which bore  
The stamp of *why* they parted, *how* they met ;  
Yet if thine aged eyes disdain to wet  
Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remembered  
tears,

Ask me no more, but let the silent years  
Be closed and cased over their memory,  
As yon mute marble where their corpses lie."  
I urged and questioned still ; she told me how  
All happened — but the cold world shall not know.

# **PROMETHEUS UNBOUND**

**A LYRICAL DRAMA**

**IN FOUR ACTS**

**AUDISNE HÆC, AMPHILARAE, SUB TERRAM ARDITE?**

*Prometheus Unbound* was published, with Shelley's name, at London in the summer of 1820, under the imprint of Marchant, for C. & J. Ollier. The drama was begun in the summer-house of his garden at Este about September, 1818, and the first Act had been finished as early as October 8; it was apparently laid aside, and again taken up at Rome in the spring of 1819, where, under the circumstances described in the preface, the second and third Acts were added, and the work, in its first form, was thus completed by April 6. The fourth Act was an afterthought, and was composed at Florence toward the end of the year. The text of 1820 is modified by Mrs. Shelley's text, 1839<sup>1</sup>, in preparing which she used Shelley's list of errors in the original edition, and also by a MS. in the possession of the Shelley family, partly described by Miss Blind in the *Westminster Review*, July, 1870.

## PREFACE

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar license. The *Prometheus Unbound* of Æschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Æschylus ; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being, resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan ; and Prometheus is, in my judgment, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in



addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement, which, in the hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind; Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied me) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candor to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one, who inhabits

the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakespeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but

it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in Nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought and with the contemporary condition of them. One great poet is a masterpiece of Nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others, and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of Nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms "a passion for reforming the world:" what passion incited him to write and publish his book he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus.

But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence ; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence ; aware that, until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take *Æschylus* rather than *Plato* as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid ; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them : if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient ; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts ; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.

# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PROMETHEUS.	ASIA	}	Oceanides.
DEMOGORGON.	PANTHEA		
JUPITER.	IONE		
THE EARTH.	THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER.		
OCEAN.	THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.		
APOLLO.	THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON. <sup>1</sup>		
MERCURY.	SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.		
HERCULES.	SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS.		
	FURIES.		

<sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the Moon, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || omit, Shelley, 1820.

## PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

### ACT I

SCENE, *a Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS *is discovered bound to the Precipice.* PANTHEA and IONE *are seated at his feet.* Time, Night. *During the Scene morning slowly breaks.*

#### PROMETHEUS

MONARCH of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits  
But One, who throng those bright and rolling  
worlds

Which Thou and I alone of living things  
Behold with sleepless eyes ! regard this Earth  
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou  
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,  
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,  
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope ;  
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,  
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,  
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.  
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,  
And moments aye divided by keen pangs  
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,  
Scorn and despair — these are mine empire :  
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest  
From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God !  
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame  
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here

15 *empire* || *emperry*, Forman, conj.

Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,  
 Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured ; without herb,  
 Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.  
 Ah me ! alas, pain, pain ever, forever !

No change, no pause, no hope ! Yet I endure.  
 I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt ?  
 I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,  
 Has it not seen ? The Sea, in storm or calm,  
 Heaven's ever-changing shadow, spread below,  
 Have its deaf waves not heard my agony ?  
 Ah me ! alas, pain, pain ever, forever !

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears  
 Of their moon-freezing crystals ; the bright chains  
 Eat with their burning cold into my bones.  
 Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips  
 His beak in poison not his own, tears up  
 My heart ; and shapeless sights come wandering  
 by,

The ghastly people of the realm of dream,  
 Mocking me ; and the Earthquake-fiends are  
 charged

To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds  
 When the rocks split and close again behind ;  
 While from their loud abysses howling throng  
 The genii of the storm, urging the rage  
 Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.  
 And yet to me welcome is day and night,  
 Whether one breaks the hoar-frost of the morn,  
 Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs  
 The leaden-colored east ; for then they lead  
 The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom —

*found  
 Heaven  
 by the  
 hound*

As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim —

Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood  
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee }

If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.

/ Disdain! Ah, no! I pity thee. What ruin  
Will hunt thee undefended through the wide  
Heaven!

How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,

Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,

) Not exultation, for I hate no more,  
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse  
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,

Whose many-voicèd Echoes, through the mist  
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!  
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,  
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept  
Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air  
Through which the Sun walks burning without  
beams!

And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poisèd wings  
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,  
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock  
The orbèd world! If then my words had power,  
/ Though I am changed so that aught evil wish  
Is dead within; although no memory be  
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!  
What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.



FIRST VOICE : *from the Mountains*

Thrice three hundred thousand years  
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood ;  
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,  
We trembled in our multitude.

SECOND VOICE : *from the Springs*

Thunderbolts had parched our water,  
We had been stained with bitter blood,  
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter  
Through a city and a solitude.

THIRD VOICE : *from the Air*

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,  
Its wastes in colors not their own,  
And oft had my serene repose  
Been cloven by many a rending groan.

FOURTH VOICE : *from the Whirlwinds*

We had soared beneath these mountains  
Unresting ages ; nor had thunder,  
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,  
Nor any power above or under  
Ever made us mute with wonder.

FIRST VOICE

But never bowed our snowy crest  
As at the voice of thine unrest.

SECOND VOICE

Never such a sound before  
To the Indian waves we bore.

A pilot asleep on the howling sea  
Leaped up from the deck in agony,  
And heard, and cried, "Ah, woe is me!"  
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

## THIRD VOICE

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven  
My still realm was never riven;  
When its wound was closed, there stood  
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

## FOURTH VOICE

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin  
To frozen caves our flight pursuing  
Made us keep silence — thus — and thus —  
Though silence is a hell to us.

## THE EARTH

The tongueless caverns of the craggy hills  
Cried, "Misery!" then; the hollow Heaven re-  
plied,  
"Misery!" And the Ocean's purple waves,  
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,  
And the pale nations heard it, "Misery!"

## PROMETHEUS

I hear a sound of voices; not the voice  
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and  
thou  
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will  
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,  
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist

Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,  
 The Titan? He who made his agony  
 The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?  
 O rock-embosomed lawns and snow-fed streams,  
 Now seen athwart frore vapors, deep below,  
 Through whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered  
 once

With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;  
 Why scorns the spirit, which informs ye, now  
 To commune with me? me alone who checked,  
 As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,  
 The falsehood and the force of him who reigns  
 Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves  
 Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:  
 Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

## THE EARTH

They dare not.

## PROMETHEUS

Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.  
 Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!  
 'Tis scarce like sound; it tingles through the  
 frame  
 As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.  
 Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice  
 I only know that thou art moving near  
 And love. How cursed I him?

## THE EARTH

How canst thou hear  
 Who knowest not the language of the dead?

136-137 *near and love* || *lov'st*, or *near*: *And Jove* — *how*, Rossetti conj.

## PROMETHEUS

Thou art a living spirit ; speak as they.

## THE EARTH

I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King  
Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain  
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.  
Subtle thou art and good ; and though the Gods  
Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God,  
Being wise and kind : earnestly hearken now.

## PROMETHEUS

Obscurely through my brain, like shadows dim,  
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel  
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love ;  
Yet 'tis not pleasure.

## THE EARTH

No, thou canst not hear ;  
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known  
Only to those who die.

## PROMETHEUS

And what art thou,  
O melancholy Voice ?

## THE EARTH

I am the Earth,  
Thy mother ; she within whose stony veins,  
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree  
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air,  
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,

When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud  
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy !  
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted  
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust,  
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread  
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.  
Then — see those million worlds which burn and  
roll

Around us — their inhabitants beheld  
My spherèd light wane in wide Heaven ; the sea  
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire  
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow  
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown ;  
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains ;  
Blue thistles bloomed in cities ; foodless toads  
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled.  
When Plague had fallen on man and beast and  
worm,

And Famine ; and black blight on herb and tree ;  
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,  
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds  
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry  
With grief, and the thin air, my breath, was  
stained

With the contagion of a mother's hate  
Breathed on her child's destroyer ; ay, I heard  
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,  
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,  
Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,  
And the inarticulate people of the dead,  
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate  
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words,  
But dare not speak them.

PROMETHEUS

Venerable mother !

All else who live and suffer take from thee  
Some comfort ; flowers, and fruits, and happy  
sounds,

And love, though fleeting ; these may not be mine.  
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not.

THE EARTH

They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,  
The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,  
Met his own image walking in the garden.  
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.

{ For know there are two worlds of life and death :  
One that which thou beholdest ; but the other  
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit  
The shadows of all forms that think and live,  
Till death unite them and they part no more ;  
Dreams and the light imaginings of men,  
And all that faith creates or love desires,  
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.  
There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,  
'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains ; all the gods  
Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,  
Vast, sceptred phantoms ; heroes, men, and beasts ;  
And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom ;  
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne  
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter  
The curse which all remember. Call at will  
Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,  
Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods  
From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin,

Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.  
Ask, and they must reply : so the revenge  
Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,  
As rainy wind through the abandoned gate  
Of a fallen palace.

## PROMETHEUS

Mother, let not aught  
Of that which may be evil pass again  
My lips, or those of aught resembling me.  
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear !

## IONE

My wings are folded o'er mine ears ;  
My wings are crossèd o'er mine eyes ;  
Yet through their silver shade appears,  
And through their lulling plumes arise,  
A Shape, a throng of sounds.  
May it be no ill to thee  
O thou of many wounds !  
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,  
Ever thus we watch and wake.

## PANTHEA

The sound is of whirlwind underground,  
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven ;  
The shape is awful, like the sound,  
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.  
A sceptre of pale gold,  
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud,  
His veined hand doth hold.  
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,  
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

## PHANTASM OF JUPITER

Why have the secret powers of this strange world  
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither  
On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds  
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice  
With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk  
In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?

## PROMETHEUS

Tremendous Image! as thou art must be  
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,  
The Titan. Speak the words which I would  
hear,  
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

## THE EARTH

Listen! And though your echoes must be mute,  
Gray mountains, and old woods, and haunted  
springs,  
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,  
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

## PHANTASM

A spirit seizes me and speaks within;  
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

## PANTHEA

See how he lifts his mighty looks! the Heaven  
Darkens above.

## IONE

He speaks! Oh, shelter me!

244 *ghostly*, Rossetti conj.



## PROMETHEUS

I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,  
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,  
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,  
Written as on a scroll : yet speak ! Oh, speak !

## PHANTASM

Fiend, I defy thee ! with a calm, fixed mind,  
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do ;  
Foul tyrant both of Gods and humankind,  
One only being shalt thou not subdue.  
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,  
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear ;  
And let alternate frost and fire  
Eat into me, and be thine ire  
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms  
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Ay, do thy worst ! Thou art omnipotent.  
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,  
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent  
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.  
Let thy malignant spirit move  
In darkness over those I love ;  
On me and mine I imprecate  
The utmost torture of thy hate ;  
And thus devote to sleepless agony,  
This undeclining head while thou must reign on  
high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord : O thou  
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,

To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do  
bow

In fear and worship — all-prevailing foe !

I curse thee ! let a sufferer's curse

Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse ;

Till thine Infinity shall be

A robe of envenomed agony ;

And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,

To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving  
brain !

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,

Ill deeds ; then be thou damned, beholding  
good ;

Both infinite as is the universe,

And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.

An awful image of calm power

Though now thou sittest, let the hour

Come, when thou must appear to be

That which thou art internally ;

And after many a false and fruitless crime,

Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless  
space and time !

PROMETHEUS

Were these my words, O Parent ?

THE EARTH

They were thine.

PROMETHEUS

It doth repent me ; words are quick and vain ;

Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.

I wish no living thing to suffer pain. }

## THE EARTH

Misery, oh, misery to me,  
That Jove at length should vanquish thee !  
Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,  
The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye !  
Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,  
Your refuge, your defence, lies fallen and van-  
quishèd !

## FIRST ECHO

Lies fallen and vanquishèd !

## SECOND ECHO

Fallen and vanquishèd !

## IONE

Fear not : 'tis but some passing spasm,  
The Titan is unvanquished still.  
But see, where through the azure chasm  
Of yon forked and snowy hill,  
Trampling the slant winds on high  
With golden-sandalled feet, that glow  
Under plumes of purple dye,  
Like rose-ensanguined ivory,  
A Shape comes now,  
Stretching on high from his right hand  
A serpent-cinctured wand.

## PANTHEA

'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

## IONE

And who are those with hydra tresses  
And iron wings, that climb the wind,

Whom the frowning God represses, —  
Like vapors steaming up behind,  
Clanging loud, an endless crowd ?

## PANTHEA

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,  
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,  
When charioted on sulphurous cloud  
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

## IONE

Are they now led from the thin dead  
On new pangs to be fed ?

## PANTHEA

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

## FIRST FURY

Ha ! I scent life !

## SECOND FURY

Let me but look into his eyes !

## THIRD FURY

The hope of torturing him smells like a heap  
Of corpses to a death-bird after battle.

## FIRST FURY

Darest thou delay, O Herald ! take cheer, Hounds  
Of Hell : what if the Son of Maia soon  
Should make us food and sport — who can please  
long  
The Omnipotent ?

## MERCURY

Back to your towers of iron,  
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail,  
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise ! and Gorgon,  
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends,  
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned  
wine,  
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate :  
These shall perform your task.

## FIRST FURY

Oh, mercy ! mercy !  
We die with our desire ! drive us not back !

## MERCURY

Crouch then in silence.  
Awful Sufferer !  
To thee unwilling, most unwilling  
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,  
To execute a doom of new revenge.  
Alas ! I pity thee, and hate myself  
That I can do no more ; aye from thy sight  
Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell,  
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,  
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,  
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife  
Against the Omnipotent ; as yon clear lamps,  
That measure and divide the weary years  
From which there is no refuge, long have taught  
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer  
arms  
With the strange might of unimagined pains

The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,  
And my commission is to lead them here,  
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends  
People the abyss, and leave them to their task.  
Be it not so! there is a secret known  
To thee, and to none else of living things,  
Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,  
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme.  
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne  
In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,  
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,  
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart,  
For benefits and meek submission tame  
The fiercest and the mightiest.

## PROMETHEUS

Evil minds  
Change good to their own nature. I gave all  
He has; and in return he chains me here  
Years, ages, night and day; whether the Sun  
Split my parched skin, or in the moony night  
The crystal-wingèd snow cling round my hair;  
Whilst my belovèd race is trampled down  
By his thought-executing ministers.  
Such is the tyrant's recompense. 'Tis just.  
He who is evil can receive no good;  
And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,  
He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude.  
He but requites me for his own misdeed.  
Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks  
With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.  
Submission thou dost know I cannot try.  
For what submission but that fatal word,

The death-seal of mankind's captivity,  
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,  
Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,  
Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield.  
Let others flatter Crime where it sits throned  
In brief Omnipotence; secure are they;  
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down  
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,  
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,  
Enduring thus, the retributive hour  
Which since we spake is even nearer now.  
But hark, the hell-hounds clamor: fear delay:  
Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

## MERCURY

Oh, that we might be spared; I to inflict,  
And thou to suffer! Once more answer me.  
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

## PROMETHEUS

I know but this, that it must come.

## MERCURY

Alas!

Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain!

## PROMETHEUS

They last while Jove must reign; nor more, nor  
less  
Do I desire or fear.

## MERCURY

Yet pause, and plunge  
Into Eternity, where recorded time,

Even all that we imagine, age on age,  
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind  
Flags wearily in its unending flight,  
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless ;  
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years  
Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved ?

PROMETHEUS

Perchance no thought can count them, yet they  
pass.

MERCURY

If thou mightst dwell among the Gods the while,  
Lapped in voluptuous joy ?

PROMETHEUS

I would not quit  
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

MERCURY

Alas ! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

PROMETHEUS

Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,  
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,  
As light in the sun, throned. How vain is  
talk !  
Call up the fiends.

IONE

Oh, sister, look ! White fire  
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded  
cedar ;  
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind !



## MERCURY

I must obey his words and thine. Alas!  
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

## PANTHEA

See where the child of Heaven, with wingèd  
feet,  
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

## IONE

Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes—  
Lest thou behold and die; they come — they  
come —  
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,  
And hollow underneath, like death.

## FIRST FURY

Prometheus!

## SECOND FURY

Immortal Titan!

## THIRD FURY

Champion of Heaven's slaves!

## PROMETHEUS

He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,  
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,  
What and who are ye? Never yet there came  
Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell  
( From the all-miscreative brain of Jove.  
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,  
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,  
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

## FIRST FURY

We are the ministers of pain, and fear,  
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,  
And clinging crime ; and as lean dogs pursue  
Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing  
fawn,  
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and  
live,  
When the great King betrays them to our will.

## PROMETHEUS

O many fearful natures in one name,  
I know ye ; and these lakes and echoes know  
The darkness and the clangor of your wings !  
But why more hideous than your loathèd selves  
Gather ye up in legions from the deep ?

## SECOND FURY

We knew not that. Sisters, rejoice, rejoice !

## PROMETHEUS

Can aught exult in its deformity ?

## SECOND FURY

The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,  
Gazing on one another : so are we.  
As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels  
To gather for her festal crown of flowers  
The aërial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,  
So from our victim's destined agony  
The shade which is our form invests us round ;  
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

## PROMETHEUS

I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,  
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

## FIRST FURY

Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone  
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?

## PROMETHEUS

Pain is my element, as hate is thine;  
Ye rend me now; I care not.

## SECOND FURY

Dost imagine  
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?

## PROMETHEUS

I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,  
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called  
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

## THIRD FURY

Thou think'st we will live through thee, one by  
one,  
Like animal life, and though we can obscure not  
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell  
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude,  
Vexing the self-content of wisest men;  
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,  
And foul desire round thine astonished heart,  
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins  
Crawling like agony?

## PROMETHEUS

Why, ye are thus now ;  
Yet am I king over myself, and rule  
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,  
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

## CHORUS OF FURIES

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the  
earth,  
Where the night has its grave and the morning  
its birth,

Come, come, come !

O ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth  
When cities sink howling in ruin ; and ye  
Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,  
And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track  
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck ;

Come, come, come !

Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,  
Strewed beneath a nation dead ;  
Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning ;  
It will burst in bloodier flashes

When ye stir it, soon returning ;  
Leave the self-contempt implanted  
In young spirits, sense-enchanted,

Misery's yet unkindled fuel ;  
Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted

To the maniac dreamer ; cruel  
More than ye can be with hate  
Is he with fear.

Come, come, come !

We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate  
And we burden the blasts of the atmosphere,  
But vainly we toil till ye come here.

## IONE

Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

## PANTHEA

These solid mountains quiver with the sound  
Even as the tremulous air ; their shadows make  
The space within my plumes more black than night.

## FIRST FURY

Your call was as a wingèd car,  
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far ;  
It rapt us from red gulfs of war.

## SECOND FURY

From wide cities, famine-wasted ;

## THIRD FURY

Groans half heard, and blood untasted ;

## FOURTH FURY

Kingly conclaves stern and cold,  
Where blood with gold is bought and sold ;

## FIFTH FURY

From the furnace, white and hot,  
In which —

## A FURY

Speak not ; whisper not ;  
I know all that ye would tell,

But to speak might break the spell  
Which must bend the Invincible,  
The stern of thought;  
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

## FURY

Tear the veil!

## ANOTHER FURY

It is torn.

## CHORUS

The pale stars of the morn  
Shine on a misery, dire to be borne.  
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee  
to scorn.  
Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst  
for man?  
Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran  
Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,  
Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for-  
ever.

One came forth of gentle worth,  
Smiling on the sanguine earth;  
His words outlived him, like swift poison  
Withering up truth, peace, and pity.  
Look! where round the wide horizon  
Many a million-peopled city  
Vomits smoke in the bright air!  
Mark that outcry of despair!  
'Tis his mild and gentle ghost  
Wailing for the faith he kindled.  
Look again! the flames almost  
To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled;

The survivors round the embers  
Gather in dread.

Joy, joy, joy!

Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,  
And the future is dark, and the present is spread  
Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

SEMICHORUS I

Drops of bloody agony flow  
From his white and quivering brow.  
Grant a little respite now.  
See! a disenchanted nation  
Springs like day from desolation;  
To Truth its state is dedicate,  
And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;  
A legioned band of linkèd brothers,  
Whom Love calls children —

SEMICHORUS II

'Tis another's.  
See how kindred murder kin!  
'Tis the vintage-time for Death and Sin;  
Blood, like new wine, bubbles within;  
Till Despair smothers  
The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.  
*[All the FURIES vanish, except one.]*

IONE

Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan  
Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart  
Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,  
And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.  
Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?

PANTHEA

Alas ! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

IONE

What didst thou see ?

PANTHEA

A woful sight : a youth  
With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

IONE

What next ?

PANTHEA

The heaven around, the earth below,  
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,  
All horrible, and wrought by human hands ;  
And some appeared the work of human hearts,  
For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles ;  
And other sights too foul to speak and live  
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear  
By looking forth ; those groans are grief enough.

FURY

Behold an emblem : those who do endure  
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but  
heap  
Thousand-fold torment on themselves and him.

PROMETHEUS

Remit the anguish of that lighted stare ;  
Close those wan lips ; let that thorn-wounded brow  
Stream not with blood ; it mingles with thy tears !



Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,  
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,  
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.  
Oh, horrible ! Thy name I will not speak —  
It hath become a curse. I see, I see  
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,  
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,  
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,  
An early-chosen, late-lamented home,  
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind ;  
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells ;  
Some — hear I not the multitude laugh loud ? —  
Impaled in lingering fire ; and mighty realms  
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,  
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood  
By the red light of their own burning homes.

## FURY

Blood thou canst see, and fire ; and canst hear  
groans :  
Worse things unheard, unseen, remain behind.

## PROMETHEUS

Worse ?

## FURY

In each human heart terror survives  
The ruin it has gorged : the loftiest fear  
All that they would disdain to think were true.  
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds  
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.  
They dare not devise good for man's estate,  
And yet they know not that they do not dare.  
The good want power, but to weep barren tears.

The powerful goodness want ; worse need for them.

The wise want love ; and those who love want wisdom ;

And all best things are thus confused to ill.

Many are strong and rich, and would be just,

But live among their suffering fellow-men

As if none felt ; they know not what they do.

PROMETHEUS

Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes ; }  
And yet I pity those they torture not. }

FURY

Thou pitiest them ? I speak no more !

[*Vanishes.*

PROMETHEUS

Ah woe !

Ah woe ! Alas ! pain, pain ever, forever !

I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear

Thy works within my woe-illumèd mind,

Thou subtle tyrant ! Peace is in the grave.

The grave hides all things beautiful and good.

I am a God and cannot find it there,

Nor would I seek it ; for, though dread revenge,

This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.

The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul

With new endurance, till the hour arrives

When they shall be no types of things which are.

PANTHEA

Alas ! what sawest thou ?

637 *woe-illumined*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839.<sup>1</sup>

## PROMETHEUS

There are two woes —  
To speak and to behold ; thou spare me one.  
Names are there, Nature's sacred watch-words,  
they  
Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry ;  
The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,  
As with one voice, Truth, Liberty, and Love !  
Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven  
Among them ; there was strife, deceit, and fear ;  
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.  
This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

## THE EARTH

I felt thy torture, son, with such mixed joy  
As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state  
I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,  
Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,  
And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,  
Its world-surrounding ether ; they behold  
Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,  
The future ; may they speak comfort to thee !

## PANTHEA

Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,  
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,  
Thronging in the blue air !

## IONE

And see ! more come,  
Like fountain-vapors when the winds are dumb,  
That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.

And hark ! is it the music of the pines ?  
Is it the lake ? Is it the waterfall ?

## PANTHEA

'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

## CHORUS OF SPIRITS

From unremembered ages we  
Gentle guides and guardians be  
Of heaven-oppressed mortality ;  
And we breathe, and sicken not,  
The atmosphere of human thought :  
Be it dim, and dank, and gray,  
Like a storm-extinguished day,  
Travelled o'er by dying gleams ;  
Be it bright as all between  
Cloudless skies and windless streams,  
Silent, liquid, and serene ;  
As the birds within the wind,  
As the fish within the wave,  
As the thoughts of man's own mind  
Float through all above the grave ;  
We make there our liquid lair,  
Voyaging cloudlike and unpent  
Through the boundless element :  
Thence we bear the prophecy  
Which begins and ends in thee !

## IONE

More yet come, one by one ; the air around  
them  
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

## FIRST SPIRIT

On a battle-trumpet's blast  
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,  
'Mid the darkness upward cast.  
From the dust of creeds outworn,  
From the tyrant's banner torn,  
Gathering round me, onward borne,  
There was mingled many a cry —  
Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!  
Till they faded through the sky;  
And one sound above, around,  
One sound beneath, around, above,  
Was moving; 'twas the soul of love;  
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,  
Which begins and ends in thee.

## SECOND SPIRIT

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,  
Which rocked beneath, immovably;  
And the triumphant storm did flee,  
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,  
Begirt with many a captive cloud,  
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,  
Each by lightning riven in half.  
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh.  
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff  
And spread beneath a hell of death  
O'er the white waters. I alit  
On a great ship lightning-split,  
And speeded hither on the sigh  
Of one who gave an enemy  
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

## THIRD SPIRIT

I sat beside a sage's bed,  
And the lamp was burning red  
Near the book where he had fed,  
When a Dream with plumes of flame  
To his pillow hovering came,  
And I knew it was the same  
Which had kindled long ago  
Pity, eloquence, and woe;  
And the world awhile below  
Wore the shade its lustre made.  
It has borne me here as fleet  
As Desire's lightning feet;  
I must ride it back ere morrow,  
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

## FOURTH SPIRIT

On a poet's lips I slept  
Dreaming like a love-adept  
In the sound his breathing kept;  
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,  
But feeds on the ærial kisses  
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.  
He will watch from dawn to gloom  
The lake-reflected sun illumine  
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,  
Nor heed nor see what things they be;  
But from these create he can  
Forms more real than living man,  
Nurslings of immortality!  
One of these awakened me,  
And I sped to succor thee.

## IONE

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and  
west

Come, as two doves to one belovèd nest,  
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air,  
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?  
And, hark! their sweet sad voices! 'tis despair  
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

## PANTHEA

Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are  
drowned.

## IONE

Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float  
On their sustaining wings of skyey grain,  
Orange and azure deepening into gold!  
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

## CHORUS OF SPIRITS

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

## FIFTH SPIRIT

As over wide dominions  
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide  
air's wildernesses,  
That planet-crested Shape swept by on lightning-  
braided pinions,  
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial  
tresses.  
His footsteps paved the world with light; but as  
I passed 'twas fading,  
And hollow Ruin yawned behind; great sages  
bound in madness,

And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished,  
unupbraiding,  
Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou,  
O King of sadness,  
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected  
gladness.

## SIXTH SPIRIT

Ah, sister ! Desolation is a delicate thing :  
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,  
But treads with killing footstep, and fans with  
silent wing  
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best  
and gentlest bear ;  
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning  
plumes above  
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and  
busy feet,  
Dream visions of aërial joy, and call the monster,  
Love,  
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom  
now we greet.

## CHORUS

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,  
Following him, destroyingly,  
- On Death's white and wingèd steed,  
Which the fleetest cannot flee,  
Trampling down both flower and weed,  
Man and beast, and foul and fair,

770 *night*. || omit period, Forman conj.771 *turn'st*, Rossetti.774 *killing*, Boscombe MS. || *silent*, Shelley, 1820.



Like a tempest through the air ;  
( Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,  
Woundless though in heart or limb.

PROMETHEUS

Spirits ! how know ye this shall be ?

CHORUS

In the atmosphere we breathe,  
As buds grow red, when the snow-storms flee,  
From spring gathering up beneath,  
Whose mild winds shake the elder-brake,  
And the wandering herdsmen know  
That the white-thorn soon will blow :  
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,  
When they struggle to increase,  
Are to us as soft winds be  
To shepherd boys, the prophecy  
Which begins and ends in thee.

IONE

Where are the Spirits fled ?

PANTHEA

Only a sense  
Remains of them, like the omnipotence  
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute  
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,  
Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul,  
Like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll.

PROMETHEUS

How fair these air-born shapes ! and yet I feel  
Most vain all hope but love ; and thou art far,

Asia ! who, when my being overflowed,  
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine  
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.  
All things are still. Alas ! how heavily  
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart ;  
Though I should dream I could even sleep with  
grief,

If slumber were denied not. I would fain  
Be what it is my destiny to be,  
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,  
Or sink into the original gulf of things.  
There is no agony, and no solace left ;  
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

PANTHEA

Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee  
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when  
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her ?

PROMETHEUS

I said all hope was vain but love ; thou lovest.

PANTHEA

Deeply in truth ; but the eastern star looks white,  
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale,  
The scene of her sad exile ; rugged once  
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine ;  
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,  
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which  
flow

Among the woods and waters, from the ether  
Of her transforming presence, which would fade  
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell !

## ACT II

SCENE I. — *Morning. A lovely Vale in the Indian Caucasus.*  
*ASIA, alone.*

## ASIA

FROM all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended ;

Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes  
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,  
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,  
Which should have learned repose ; thou hast  
descended

Cradled in tempests ; thou dost wake, O Spring !  
O child of many winds ! As suddenly  
Thou comest as the memory of a dream,  
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet ;  
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up  
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds  
The desert of our life.

This is the season, this the day, the hour ;  
At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,  
Too long desired, too long delaying, come !  
How like death - worms the wingless moments  
crawl !

The point of one white star is quivering still  
Deep in the orange light of widening morn  
Beyond the purple mountains ; through a chasm  
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake  
Reflects it ; now it wanes ; it gleams again  
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads  
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air ;

'Tis lost ! and through yon peaks of cloud-like  
snow

The roseate sunlight quivers ; hear I not  
The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes  
Winnowing the crimson dawn ?

*PANTHEA enters*

I feel, I see

Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in  
tears,  
Like stars half-quenched in mists of silver dew.  
Belovèd and most beautiful, who wearest  
The shadow of that soul by which I live,  
How late thou art ! the spherèd sun had climbed  
The sea ; my heart was sick with hope, before  
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

*PANTHEA*

Pardon, great Sister ! but my wings were faint  
With the delight of a remembered dream,  
As are the noontide plumes of summer winds  
Sate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep  
Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm,  
Before the sacred Titan's fall and thy  
Unhappy love had made, through use and pity,  
Both love and woe familiar to my heart  
As they had grown to thine : erewhile I slept  
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean  
Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,  
Our young Ione's soft and milky arms  
Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,  
While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within  
The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom :

But not as now, since I am made the wind  
 Which fails beneath the music that I bear  
 Of thy most wordless converse ; since dissolved  
 Into the sense with which love talks, my rest  
 Was troubled and yet sweet ; my waking hours  
 Too full of care and pain.

ASIA

Lift up thine eyes,  
 And let me read thy dream.

PANTHEA

As I have said,  
 With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.  
 The mountain mists, condensing at our voice  
 Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,  
 From the keen ice shielding our linkèd sleep.  
 Then two dreams came. One I remember not.  
 But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs  
 Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night  
 Grew radiant with the glory of that form  
 Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell  
 Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,  
 Faint with intoxication of keen joy :  
 “ Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world  
 With loveliness — more fair than aught but her,  
 Whose shadow thou art — lift thine eyes on me.”  
 I lifted them ; the overpowering light  
 Of that immortal shape was shadowed o’er  
 By love ; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,  
 And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,  
 Steamed forth like vaporous fire ; an atmosphere

Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power,  
 As the warm ether of the morning sun  
 Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.  
 I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt  
 His presence flow and mingle through my blood  
 Till it became his life, and his grew mine,  
 And I was thus absorbed, until it passed,  
 And like the vapors when the sun sinks down,  
 Gathering again in drops upon the pines,  
 And tremulous as they, in the deep night  
 My being was condensed ; and as the rays  
 Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear  
 His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died  
 Like footsteps of weak melody ; thy name  
 Among the many sounds alone I heard  
 Of what might be articulate ; though still  
 I listened through the night when sound was none.  
 Ione wakened then, and said to me :  
 “ Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night ?  
 I always knew what I desired before,  
 Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.  
 But now I cannot tell thee what I seek ;  
 I know not ; something sweet, since it is sweet  
 Even to desire ; it is thy sport, false sister ;  
 Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,  
 Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept  
 And mingled it with thine ; for when just now  
 We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips  
 The sweet air that sustained me ; and the warmth  
 Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,  
 Quivered between our intertwining arms.”  
 I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,  
 But fled to thee.

ASIA

Thou speakest, but thy words  
Are as the air ; I feel them not. Oh, lift  
Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul !

PANTHEA

I lift them, though they droop beneath the load  
Of that they would express ; what canst thou see  
But thine own fairest shadow imaged there ?

ASIA

Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless  
heaven  
Contracted to two circles underneath  
Their long, fine lashes ; dark, far, measureless,  
Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.

PANTHEA

Why lookest thou as if a spirit passed ?

ASIA

There is a change ; beyond their inmost depth  
I see a shade, a shape : 'tis He, arrayed  
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread  
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.  
Prometheus, it is thine ! depart not yet !  
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again  
Within that bright pavilion which their beams  
Shall build on the waste world ? The dream is  
told.

What shape is that between us ? Its rude hair

122 moon, Boscombe MS. || morn, Shelley, 1820.

Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard  
Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air,  
For through its gray robe gleams the golden dew  
Whose stars the noon has quenched not.

DREAM

Follow! Follow!

PANTHEA

It is mine other dream.

ASIA

It disappears.

PANTHEA

It passes now into my mind. Methought  
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds  
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond tree;  
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness  
A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with  
frost;  
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;  
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells  
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,  
OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

ASIA

As you speak, your words  
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep  
With shapes. Methought among the lawns to-  
gether  
We wandered, underneath the young gray dawn,  
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds



Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,

Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind ;  
 And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,  
 Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently ;  
 And there was more which I remember not ;  
 But on the shadows of the morning clouds,  
 Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written  
 FOLLOW, OH, FOLLOW ! as they vanished by ;  
 And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had  
 fallen,

The like was stamped, as with a withering fire ;  
 A wind arose among the pines ; it shook  
 The clinging music from their boughs, and then  
 Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of  
 ghosts,

Were heard : OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW  
 ME !

And then I said, " Panthea, look on me."  
 But in the depth of those belovèd eyes  
 Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

ECHO

Follow, follow !

PANTHEA

The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our  
 voices,

As they were spirit-tongued.

ASIA

It is some being  
 Around the crags. What fine clear sounds ! Oh,  
 list !

ECHOES, *unseen*

Echoes we : listen !  
 We cannot stay :  
 As dew-stars glisten  
 Then fade away —  
 Child of Ocean !

ASIA

Hark ! Spirits speak. The liquid responses  
 Of their ærial tongues yet sound.

PANTHEA

I hear.

ECHOES

Oh, follow, follow,  
 As our voice recedeth  
 Through the caverns hollow,  
 Where the forest spreadeth ;

*(More distant)*

Oh, follow, follow !  
 Through the caverns hollow,  
 As the song floats thou pursue,  
 Where the wild bee never flew,  
 Through the noontide darkness deep,  
 By the odor-breathing sleep  
 Of faint night-flowers, and the waves  
 At the fountain-lighted caves,  
 While our music, wild and sweet,  
 Mocks thy gently falling feet,  
 Child of Ocean !

## ASIA

Shall we pursue the sound ? It grows more faint  
And distant.

## PANTHEA

List ! the strain floats nearer now.

## ECHOES.

In the world unknown  
Sleeps a voice unspoken ;  
By thy step alone  
Can its rest be broken ;  
Child of Ocean !

## ASIA

How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind !

## ECHOES

Oh, follow, follow !  
Through the caverns hollow,  
As the song floats thou pursue,  
By the woodland noontide dew ;  
By the forests, lakes, and fountains,  
Through the many-folded mountains ;  
To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms,  
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,  
On the day when He and thou  
Parted, to commingle now ;  
Child of Ocean !

## ASIA

Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,  
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE II. *A Forest intermingled with Rocks and Caverns. ASIA and PANTHEA pass into it. Two young Fauns are sitting on a Rock, listening.*

## SEMICHORUS I OF SPIRITS

The path through which that lovely twain  
Have passed, by cedar, pine, and yew,  
And each dark tree that ever grew,  
Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue ;  
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,  
Can pierce its interwoven bowers,  
Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,  
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze  
Between the trunks of the hoar trees,  
Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers  
Of the green laurel blown anew,  
And bends, and then fades silently,  
One frail and fair anemone ;  
Or when some star of many a one  
That climbs and wanders through steep night,  
Has found the cleft through which alone  
Beams fall from high those depths upon, —  
Ere it is borne away, away,  
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,  
It scatters drops of golden light,  
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite ;  
And the gloom divine is all around ;  
And underneath is the mossy ground.

## SEMICHORUS II

There the voluptuous nightingales,  
Are awake through all the broad noonday :

When one with bliss or sadness fails,  
And through the windless ivy-boughs,  
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away  
On its mate's music-panting bosom ;  
Another from the swinging blossom,  
Watching to catch the languid close  
Of the last strain, then lifts on high  
The wings of the weak melody,  
Till some new strain of feeling bear  
The song, and all the woods are mute ;  
When there is heard through the dim air  
The rush of wings, and rising there,  
Like many a lake-surrounded flute,  
Sounds overflow the listener's brain  
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

## SEMICHORUS I

There those enchanted eddies play  
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,  
By Demogorgon's mighty law,  
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,  
All spirits on that secret way,  
As inland boats are driven to Ocean  
Down streams made strong with mountain-  
thaw ;  
And first there comes a gentle sound  
To those in talk or slumber bound,  
And wakes the destined ; soft emotion  
Attracts, impels them ; those who saw  
Say from the breathing earth behind

38 *lake-surrounded*, Boscombe MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *lake surrounding*, Shelley, 1820.

There steams a plume-uplifting wind  
Which drives them on their path, while they  
Believe their own swift wings and feet  
The sweet desires within obey ;  
And so they float upon their way,  
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,  
The storm of sound is driven along,  
Sucked up and hurrying ; as they fleet  
Behind, its gathering billows meet .  
And to the fatal mountain bear  
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

FIRST FAUN

Canst thou imagine where those spirits live  
Which make such delicate music in the woods ?  
We haunt within the least frequented caves  
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,  
Yet never meet them, though we hear them  
oft :  
Where may they hide themselves ?

SECOND FAUN

'Tis hard to tell ;  
I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,  
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun  
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave  
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,  
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float  
Under the green and golden atmosphere  
Which noontide kindles through the woven leaves ;  
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,

The which they breathed within those lucent  
domes,

Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,  
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,  
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire  
Under the waters of the earth again.

## FIRST FAUN

! If such live thus, have others other lives,  
/ Under pink blossoms or within the bells  
Of meadow flowers or folded violets deep,  
/ Or on their dying odors, when they die,  
Or in the sunlight of the spherèd dew?

## SECOND FAUN

Ay, many more which we may well divine.  
But should we stay to speak, noontide would come,  
And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,  
And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs  
Of Fate, and Chance, and God, and Chaos old,  
And Love and the chained Titan's woful doom,  
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth  
One brotherhood ; delightful strains which cheer  
Our solitary twilights, and which charm  
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

87 *in*, Boscombe MS. || *on*, Shelley, 1820.

88 *which* || *than*, Rossetti conj.

93 *doom*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *dooms*, Shelley, 1820.

SCENE III. — *A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains.* ASIA and  
PANTHEA.

PANTHEA

Hither the sound has borne us — to the realm  
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,  
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,  
Whence the oracular vapor is hurled up  
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,  
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,  
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they  
    drain  
To deep intoxication ; and uplift,  
Like Mænads who cry loud, Evoe ! Evoe !  
The voice which is contagion to the world.

ASIA

Fit throne for such a Power ! Magnificent !  
How glorious art thou, Earth ! and if thou be  
The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,  
Though evil stain its work, and it should be  
Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,  
I could fall down and worship that and thee.  
Even now my heart adoreth. Wonderful !  
Look, sister, ere the vapor dim thy brain :  
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,  
As a lake, paving in the morning sky,  
With azure waves which burst in silver light,  
Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on  
Under the curdling winds, and islanding  
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,



Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,  
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumined caves,  
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist ;  
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains

From icy spires of sunlike radiance fling  
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,  
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,  
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.  
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl  
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines  
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,  
Awful as silence. Hark ! the rushing snow !  
The sun-awakened avalanche ! whose mass,  
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there  
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds  
As thought by thought is piled, till some great  
truth

Is loosened, and the nations echo round,  
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

#### PANTHEA

Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking  
In crimson foam, even at our feet ! it rises  
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon  
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

#### ASIA

The fragments of the cloud are scattered up ;  
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair ;  
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes ; my brain  
Grows dizzy ; I see shapes within the mist.

PANTHEA

A countenance with beckoning smiles ; there burns  
 An azure fire within its golden locks !  
 Another and another : hark ! they speak !

SONG OF SPIRITS

To the deep, to the deep,  
                     Down, down !  
 Through the shade of sleep,  
 Through the cloudy strife  
 Of Death and of Life ;  
 Through the veil and the bar  
 Of things which seem and are,  
 Even to the steps of the remotest throne,  
                     Down, down !

While the sound whirls around,  
                     Down, down !  
 As the fawn draws the hound,  
 As the lightning the vapor,  
 As a weak moth the taper ;  
 Death, despair ; love, sorrow ;  
 Time, both ; to-day, to-morrow ;  
 As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,  
                     Down, down !

Through the gray, void abysm,  
                     Down, down !  
 Where the air is no prism,  
 And the moon and stars are not,  
 And the cavern-crag wears not  
 The radiance of Heaven,

Nor the gloom to Earth given,  
Where there is one pervading, one alone,  
Down, down !

In the depth of the deep  
Down, down !  
Like veiled lightning asleep,  
Like the spark nursed in embers,  
The last look Love remembers,  
Like a diamond, which shines  
On the dark wealth of mines,  
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.  
Down, down !

We have bound thee, we guide thee ;  
Down, down !  
With the bright form beside thee ;  
Resist not the weakness,  
Such strength is in meekness  
That the Eternal, the Immortal,  
Must unloose through life's portal  
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his  
throne  
By that alone.

93 *the* || *thy*, Rossetti conj.

SCENE IV. — *The Cave of DEMOGORGON. ASIA and PANTHEA.*

PANTHEA

What veiled form sits on that ebon throne ?

ASIA

The veil has fallen.

PANTHEA

I see a mighty darkness  
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom  
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,  
Ungazed upon and shapeless ; neither limb,  
Nor form, nor outline ; yet we feel it is  
A living Spirit.

DEMOGORGON

Ask what thou wouldst know.

ASIA

What canst thou tell ?

DEMOGORGON

All things thou dar'st demand.

ASIA

Who made the living world ?

DEMOGORGON

God.

ASIA

Who made all  
That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will,  
Imagination?

DEMOGORGON

God : Almighty God.

ASIA

Who made that sense which, when the winds of  
spring  
In rarest visitation, or the voice  
Of one belovèd heard in youth alone,  
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim  
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,  
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude  
When it returns no more?

DEMOGORGON

Merciful God.

ASIA

And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,  
Which from the links of the great chain of things  
To every thought within the mind of man  
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels  
Under the load towards the pit of death;  
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;  
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;  
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech  
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day;  
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

DEMOGORGON

He reigns.

ASIA

Utter his name ; a world pining in pain  
Asks but his name ; curses shall drag him down.

DEMOGORGON

He reigns.

ASIA

I feel, I know it : who ?

DEMOGORGON

He reigns.

ASIA

Who reigns ? There was the Heaven and Earth  
at first,

And Light and Love ; then Saturn, from whose  
throne

Time fell, an envious shadow ; such the state

Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,

As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves

Before the wind or sun has withered them

And semivital worms ; but he refused

The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,

The skill which wields the elements, the thought

Which pierces this dim universe like light,

Self-empire, and the majesty of love ;

For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prome-  
theus

Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,

And with this law alone, " Let man be free,"

Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.

To know nor faith, nor love, nor law, to be  
Omnipotent but friendless, is to reign ;  
And Jove now reigned ; for on the race of man  
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,  
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,  
Fell ; and the unseasonable seasons drove,  
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,  
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves ;  
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,  
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle  
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,  
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.  
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes  
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,  
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,  
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings  
The shape of Death ; and Love he sent to bind  
The disunited tendrils of that vine  
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart ;  
And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,  
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath  
The frown of man ; and tortured to his will  
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,  
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms  
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.  
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,  
Which is the measure of the universe ;  
And Science struck the thrones of earth and  
heaven,  
Which shook, but fell not ; and the harmonious  
mind  
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song ;  
And music lifted up the listening spirit

Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,  
 Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound ;  
 And human hands first mimicked and then  
     mocked,

With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,  
 The human form, till marble grew divine ;  
 And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see  
 Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.  
 He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,  
 And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like  
     sleep.

He taught the implicated orbits woven  
 Of the wide-wandering stars ; and how the sun  
 Changes his lair, and by what secret spell  
 The pale moon is transformed, when her broad  
     eye

Gazes not on the interlunar sea.

He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,  
 The tempest-wingèd chariots of the Ocean,  
 And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then  
 Were built, and through their snow-like columns  
     flowed

The warm winds, and the azure ether shone,  
 And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.  
 Such, the alleviations of his state,  
 Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs  
 Withering in destined pain ; but who rains down  
 Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while  
 Man looks on his creation like a god  
 And sees that it is glorious, drives him on,  
 The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,  
 The outcast, the abandoned, the alone ?

100 rains, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || reigns, Shelley, 1820.



{ Not Jove: while yet his frown shook heaven, ay,  
when

{ His adversary from adamantine chains  
Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare  
Who is his master? Is he too a slave?

## DEMOGORGON

All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil:  
Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

## ASIA

Whom called'st thou God?

## DEMOGORGON

I spoke but as ye speak,  
For Jove is the supreme of living things.

## ASIA

/ Who is the master of the slave?

## DEMOGORGON

If the abysm  
Could vomit forth its secrets — but a voice  
Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;  
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze  
On the revolving world? (What to bid speak  
Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change? To  
these  
All things are subject but eternal Love.)

## ASIA

So much I asked before, and my heart gave  
The response thou hast given; and of such truths

Each to itself must be the oracle.  
 One more demand ; and do thou answer me  
 As my own soul would answer, did it know  
 That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise |  
 Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world :  
 When shall the destined hour arrive ?

DEMOGORGON

Behold !

ASIA

The rocks are cloven, and through the purple  
 night  
 I see cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds  
 Which trample the dim winds ; in each there  
 stands  
 A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.  
 Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,  
 And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars ;  
 Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and  
 drink  
 With eager lips the wind of their own speed,  
 As if the thing they loved fled on before,  
 And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright  
 locks  
 Stream like a comet's flashing hair ; they all  
 Sweep onward.

DEMOGORGON

These are the immortal Hours,  
 Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

ASIA

A Spirit with a dreadful countenance  
 Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulf.

Unlike thy brethren, ghastly Charioteer,  
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me?  
Speak!

## SPIRIT

I am the Shadow of a destiny  
More dread than is my aspect; ere yon planet  
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me  
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

## ASIA

What meanest thou?

## PANTHEA

That terrible Shadow floats  
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke  
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.  
Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly  
Terrified; watch its path among the stars  
Blackening the night!

## ASIA

Thus I am answered: strange!

## PANTHEA

See, near the verge, another chariot stays;  
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,  
Which comes and goes within its sculptured  
rim  
Of delicate strange tracery; the young Spirit  
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope;  
How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light  
Lures wingèd insects through the lampless air.

SPIRIT

My coursers are fed with the lightning,  
 They drink of the whirlwind's stream,  
 And when the red morning is bright'ning  
 They bathe in the fresh sunbeam.  
 They have strength for their swiftness I deem ;  
 Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire — and their speed makes night kindle ;  
 I fear — they outstrip the typhoon ;  
 Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle  
 We encircle the earth and the moon.  
 We shall rest from long labors at noon ;  
 Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE V. — *The Car pauses within a Cloud on the Top of a snowy Mountain.* ASIA, PANTHEA, and the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

SPIRIT

( On the brink of the night and the morning  
My coursers are wont to respire ;  
But the Earth has just whispered a warning  
That their flight must be swifter than fire ;  
They shall drink the hot speed of desire !

ASIA

Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath  
Would give them swifter speed.

SPIRIT

Alas ! it could not.

PANTHEA

O Spirit ! pause, and tell whence is the light  
Which fills the cloud ? the sun is yet unrisen.

SPIRIT

The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo  
Is held in heaven by wonder ; and the light  
Which fills this vapor, as the ærial hue  
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,  
Flows from thy mighty sister.

PANTHEA

Yes, I feel —

ASIA

What is it with thee, sister ? Thou art pale.

PANTHEA

How thou art changed! I dare not look on  
thee ;

I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure  
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change  
Is working in the elements, which suffer  
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell  
That on the day when the clear hyaline  
Was cloven at thy uprise, and thou didst stand  
Within a veined shell, which floated on  
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,  
Among the *Ægean* isles, and by the shores  
Which bear thy name,—love, like the atmos-  
phere

Of the sun's fire filling the living world,  
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven  
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves  
And all that dwells within them ; till grief cast  
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came.  
Such art thou now ; nor is it I alone,  
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen  
one,

But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.  
Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the  
love

Of all articulate beings ? Feelest thou not  
The inanimate winds enamoured of thee ? List !

[*Mus.*

ASIA

Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his  
Whose echoes they are ; yet all love is sweet,  
Given or returned. Common as light is love,

And its familiar voice wearies not ever.  
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,  
It makes the reptile equal to the God ;  
They who inspire it most are fortunate,  
As I am now ; but those who feel it most  
Are happier still, after long sufferings,  
As I shall soon become.

## PANTHEA

List ! Spirits speak.

VOICE *in the air, singing*

Life of Life, thy lips enkindle  
With their love the breath between them ;  
And thy smiles before they dwindle  
Make the cold air fire ; then screen them  
In those looks, where whoso gazes  
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light ! thy limbs are burning  
Through the vest which seems to hide them ;  
As the radiant lines of morning  
Through the clouds, ere they divide them ;  
And this atmosphere divinest  
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others ; none beholds thee,  
But thy voice sounds low and tender  
Like the fairest, for it folds thee  
From the sight, that liquid splendor,  
And all feel, yet see thee never,  
As I feel now, lost forever !

54 *limbs*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *lips*, Shelley, 1820.

Lamp of Earth ! where'er thou movest  
 Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,  
 And the souls of whom thou lovest  
 Walk upon the winds with lightness,  
 Till they fail, as I am failing,  
 Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing !

ASIA

( My soul is an enchanted boat,  
 Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float  
 Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing ;  
 And thine doth like an angel sit  
 Beside a helm conducting it,  
 Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.  
 It seems to float ever, forever,  
 Upon that many-winding river,  
 Between mountains, woods, abysses,  
 A paradise of wildernesses !  
 Till, like one in slumber bound,  
 Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,  
 Into a sea profound of ever-spreading sound.

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions  
 In music's most serene dominions ;  
 Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.  
 And we sail on, away, afar,  
 Without a course, without a star,  
 But, by the instinct of sweet music driven ;  
 Till through Elysian garden islets  
 By thee most beautiful of pilots,  
 Where never mortal pinnacle glided,  
 The boat of my desire is guided ;



Realms where the air we breathe is love,  
Which in the winds on the waves doth move,  
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have passed Age's icy caves,  
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,  
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray ;  
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee  
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,  
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day ;  
A paradise of vaulted bowers  
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,  
And watery paths that wind between  
Wildernesses calm and green,  
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,  
And rest, having beheld ; somewhat like thee ;  
Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously !

96 *and on*, Rossetti.



Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne  
The dreadful might of ever-living limbs  
Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,  
To redescend, and trample out the spark.

Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede,  
And let it fill the dædal cups like fire,  
And from the flower-inwoven soil divine,  
Ye all-triumphant harmonies, arise,  
As dew from earth under the twilight stars.  
Drink ! be the nectar circling through your veins  
The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,  
Till exultation burst in one wide voice  
Like music from Elysian winds.

And thou

Ascend beside me, veiled in the light  
Of the desire which makes thee one with me,  
Thetis, bright image of eternity !  
When thou didst cry, " Insufferable might !  
God ! spare me ! I sustain not the quick flames,  
The penetrating presence ; all my being,  
Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw  
Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,  
Sinking through its foundations," — even then  
Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third  
Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,  
Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld,  
Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,  
(Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels  
Griding the winds ?) from Demogorgon's throne.  
Victory ! victory ! Feel'st thou not, O world,  
The earthquake of his chariot thundering up  
Olympus ?

[*The Car of the HOUR arrives. DEMOGORGON descends and moves towards the Throne of JUPITER.*

Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

DEMOGORGON

Eternity. Demand no direr name.  
Descend, and follow me down the abyss.  
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;  
Mightier than thee; and we must dwell together  
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.  
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,  
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee;  
Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny  
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,  
Put forth thy might.

JUPITER

Detested prodigy!  
Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons  
I trample thee! Thou lingerest?  
Mercy! mercy!  
No pity, no release, no respite! Oh,  
That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,  
Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,  
On Caucasus! he would not doom me thus.  
Gentle, and just, and dreadful, is he not  
The monarch of the world? What then art thou?  
No refuge! no appeal!

Sink with me then,  
We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,  
Even as a vulture and a snake outspent  
Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,

Into a shoreless sea ! Let hell unlock  
Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,  
And whelm on them into the bottomless void  
This desolated world, and thee, and me,  
The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck  
Of that for which they combated !

Ai, Ai !

The elements obey me not. I sink  
Dizzily down, ever, forever, down.  
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above  
Darkens my fall with victory ! Ai, Ai !

SCENE II. — *The Mouth of a great River in the Island Atlantis.*

*OCEAN is discovered reclining near the shore ; APOLLO stands beside him.*

OCEAN

He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown ?

APOLLO

Ay, when the strife was ended which made dim  
The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,  
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven  
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged  
skirts

Of the victorious darkness, as he fell ;  
Like the last glare of day's red agony,  
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,  
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

OCEAN

He sunk to the abyss ? to the dark void ?

## APOLLO

An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud  
 On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings  
 Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes,  
 Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded  
 By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail  
 Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length  
 Prone, and the aërial ice clings over it.

## OCEAN

Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting sea  
 Which are my realm, will heave, unstained with  
 blood,  
 Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn  
 Swayed by the summer air ; my streams will flow  
 Round many-peopled continents, and round  
 Fortunate isles ; and from their glassy thrones  
 Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark  
 The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see  
 The floating bark of the light-laden moon  
 With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,  
 Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea ;  
 Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,  
 And desolation, and the mingled voice  
 Of slavery and command ; but by the light  
 Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odors,  
 And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,  
 That sweetest music, such as spirits love.

## APOLLO

And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make  
 My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse

Darkens the sphere I guide. But list, I hear  
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit  
That sits i' the morning star.

## OCEAN

Thou must away ;  
Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell.  
The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it  
With azure calm out of the emerald urns  
Which stand forever full beside my throne.  
Behold the Nereids under the green sea,  
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like  
stream,  
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair,  
With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,  
Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.

[*A sound of waves is heard.*]

It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.  
Peace, monster ; I come now. Farewell.

## APOLLO

Farewell.

SCENE III. — *Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, *the*  
EARTH, SPIRITS, ASIA, *and* PANTHEA, *borne in the Car with the*  
SPIRIT OF THE HOUR. HERCULES *unbinds* PROMETHEUS, *who*  
*descends.*

## HERCULES

Most glorious among spirits ! thus doth strength  
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,  
And thee, who art the form they animate,  
Minister like a slave.

39 *i' the*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *on the*, Shelley, 1820.

## PROMETHEUS

Thy gentle words  
Are sweeter even than freedom long desired  
And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,  
Shadow of beauty unbeheld ; and ye,  
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain  
Sweet to remember, through your love and care ;  
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave,  
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,  
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,  
And paved with veined emerald ; and a fountain  
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.  
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears,  
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,  
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light ;  
And there is heard the ever-moving air  
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,  
And bees ; and all around are mossy seats,  
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft  
grass ;

A simple dwelling, which shall be our own ;  
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,  
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.  
What can hide man from mutability ?  
And if ye sigh, then I will smile ; and thou,  
Ione, shalt chant fragments of sea-music,  
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away  
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to  
shed.

We will entangle buds and flowers and beams  
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make



Strange combinations out of common things,  
Like human babes in their brief innocence ;  
And we will search, with looks and words of  
- love,

For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,  
Our unexhausted spirits ; and, like lutes  
Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,  
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,  
From difference sweet where discord cannot be ;  
And hither come, sped on the charmed winds,  
Which meet from all the points of heaven — as  
bees

From every flower aërial Enna feeds  
At their known island-homes in Himera —  
The echoes of the human world, which tell  
Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,  
And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,  
Itself the echo of the heart, and all  
That tempers or improves man's life, now free ;  
And lovely apparitions, — dim at first,  
Then radiant, as the mind arising bright  
From the embrace of beauty (whence the forms  
Of which these are the phantoms) casts on them  
The gathered rays which are reality —  
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal  
Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,  
And arts, though unimagined, yet to be ;  
The wandering voices and the shadows these  
Of all that man becomes, the mediators  
Of that best worship, love, by him and us  
Given and returned ; swift shapes and sounds,  
which grow  
More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,

And, veil by veil, evil and error fall.  
Such virtue has the cave and place around.

[*Turning to the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.*

For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,  
Give her that curvèd shell, which Proteus old  
Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it  
A voice to be accomplished, and which thou  
Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

IONE

Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely  
Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell.  
See the pale azure fading into silver  
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light.  
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?

SPIRIT

It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean :  
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

PROMETHEUS

Go, borne over the cities of mankind  
On whirlwind-footed coursers ; once again  
Outspeed the sun around the orbèd world ;  
And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,  
Thou breathe into the many-folded shell,  
Loosening its mighty music ; it shall be  
As thunder mingled with clear echoes ; then  
Return ; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.

And thou, O Mother Earth ! —

## THE EARTH

I hear, I feel ;

Thy lips are on me, and thy touch runs down  
Even to the adamantine central gloom  
Along these marble nerves ; 'tis life, 'tis joy,  
And, through my withered, old, and icy frame  
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down  
Circling. Henceforth the many children fair  
Folded in my sustaining arms ; all plants,  
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,  
And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,  
Which drew disease and pain from my wan  
bosom,

Draining the poison of despair, shall take  
And interchange sweet nutriment ; to me  
Shall they become like sister-antelopes  
By one fair dam, snow-white, and swift as wind,  
Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.  
The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float  
Under the stars like balm ; night-folded flowers  
Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose ;  
And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather  
Strength for the coming day, and all its joy ;  
And death shall be the last embrace of her  
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother,  
Folding her child, says, "Leave me not again."

## ASIA

Oh, mother ! wherefore speak the name of death ?  
Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and  
speak,  
Who die ?

## THE EARTH

It would avail not to reply ;  
Thou art immortal and this tongue is known  
But to the uncommunicating dead.  
Death is the veil which those who live call life ;  
They sleep, and it is lifted ; and meanwhile  
In mild variety the seasons mild  
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,  
And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,  
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's  
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain  
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,  
Shall clothe the forests and the fields, ay, even  
The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,  
With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.  
And thou ! there is a cavern where my spirit  
Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain  
Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it  
Became mad too, and built a temple there,  
And spoke, and were oracular, and lured  
The erring nations round to mutual war,  
And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee ;  
Which breath now rises as amongst tall weeds  
A violet's exhalation, and it fills  
With a serener light and crimson air  
Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around ;  
It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,  
And the dark linkèd ivy tangling wild,  
And budding, blown, or odor-faded blooms  
Which star the winds with points of colored light  
As they rain through them, and bright golden  
globes

Of fruit suspended in their own green heaven,  
And through their veined leaves and amber stems  
The flowers whose purple and translucent bowls  
Stand ever mantling with ærial dew,  
The drink of spirits ; and it circles round,  
Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,  
Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,  
Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.  
Arise ! Appear !

*[A SPIRIT rises in the likeness of a winged child.]*

This is my torch-bearer ;  
Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing  
On eyes from which he kindled it anew  
With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,  
For such is that within thine own. Run, way-  
ward,  
And guide this company beyond the peak  
Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,  
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,  
Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes  
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,  
And up the green ravine, across the vale,  
Beside the windless and crystalline pool,  
Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,  
The image of a temple, built above,  
Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,  
And palm-like capital, and overwrought,  
And populous most with living imagery,  
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles  
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.  
It is deserted now, but once it bore  
Thy name, Prometheus ; there the emulous youths  
Bore to thy honor through the divine gloom

The lamp which was thine emblem ; even as those  
 Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope  
 Into the grave, across the night of life,  
 As thou hast borne it most triumphantly  
 To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell !  
 Beside that temple is the destined cave.



SCENE IV. — *A Forest. In the background a Cave. PROMETHEUS,  
 ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, and the SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.*

IONE

Sister, it is not earthly ; how it glides  
 Under the leaves ! how on its head there burns  
 A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams  
 Are twined with its fair hair ! how, as it moves,  
 The splendor drops in flakes upon the grass !  
 Knowest thou it ?

PANTHEA

It is the delicate spirit  
 That guides the earth through heaven. From  
     afar  
 The populous constellations call that light  
 The loveliest of the planets ; and sometimes  
 It floats along the spray of the salt sea,  
 Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,  
 Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep,  
 Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,  
 Or through the green waste wilderness, as now,  
 Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned  
 It loved our sister Asia, and it came  
 Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light  
 Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted

As one bit by a dipsas, and with her  
It made its childish confidence, and told her  
All it had known or seen, for it saw much,  
Yet idly reasoned what it saw ; and called her,  
For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I,  
Mother, dear mother.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH, *running to ASIA*

Mother, dearest mother !  
May I then talk with thee as I was wont ?  
May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,  
After thy looks have made them tired of joy ?  
May I then play beside thee the long noons,  
When work is none in the bright silent air ?

ASIA

I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth  
Can cherish thee unenvied. Speak, I pray ;  
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH

Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child  
Cannot be wise like thee, within this day ;  
And happier too ; happier and wiser both.  
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly  
worms,  
And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs  
That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever  
An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world ;  
And that, among the haunts of humankind,  
Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,  
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,  
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,

Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts  
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man ;  
And women too, ugliest of all things evil,  
(Though fair, even in a world where thou art  
fair,

When good and kind, free and sincere like thee)  
When false or frowning made me sick at heart  
To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen.  
Well, my path lately lay through a great city  
Into the woody hills surrounding it ;  
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate ;  
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook  
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet  
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all ;  
A long, long sound, as it would never end ;  
And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly  
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,  
Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet  
The music pealed along. I hid myself  
Within a fountain in the public square,  
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon  
Seen in a wave under green leaves ; and soon  
Those ugly human shapes and visages  
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,  
Passed floating through the air, and fading still  
Into the winds that scattered them ; and those  
From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely  
forms

After some foul disguise had fallen, and all  
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise

And greetings of delighted wonder, all  
Went to their sleep again ; and when the dawn



Came, wouldst thou think that toads, and snakes,  
and efts,  
Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were,  
And that with little change of shape or hue;  
All things had put their evil nature off;  
I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake,  
Upon a drooping bough with nightshade twined,  
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward  
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,  
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay  
Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky;  
So with my thoughts full of these happy changes,  
We meet again, the happiest change of all.

## ASIA

And never will we part, till thy chaste sister,  
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon,  
Will look on thy more warm and equal light  
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow,  
And love thee.

## SPIRIT OF THE EARTH

What! as Asia loves Prometheus?

## ASIA

Peace, wanton! thou art yet not old enough.  
Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes  
To multiply your lovely selves, and fill  
With spherèd fires the interlunar air?

## SPIRIT OF THE EARTH

Nay, mother, while my sister trims her lamp  
'Tis hard I should go darkling.

ASIA

Listen ; look !

*The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR enters*

PROMETHEUS

We feel what thou hast heard and seen ; yet speak.

SPIRIT OF THE HOUR

Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder filled  
 The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,  
 There was a change ; the impalpable thin air  
 And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,  
 As if the sense of love, dissolved in them,  
 Had folded itself round the spherèd world.  
 My vision then grew clear, and I could see  
 Into the mysteries of the universe.  
 Dizzy as with delight I floated down ;  
 Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,  
 My coursers sought their birthplace in the sun,  
 Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,  
 Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire,  
 And where my moonlike car will stand within  
 A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms  
 Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,  
 And you, fair nymphs, looking the love we feel, —  
 In memory of the tidings it has borne, —  
 Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,  
 Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,  
 And open to the bright and liquid sky.  
 Yoked to it by an amphisbenic snake  
 The likeness of those wingèd steeds will mock  
 The flight from which they find repose. Alas,

110 *Pasturing on*, Forman conj.

Whither has wandered now my partial tongue  
When all remains untold which ye would hear ?  
As I have said, I floated to the earth ;  
It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss  
To move, to breathe, to be. I wandering went  
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,  
And first was disappointed not to see  
Such mighty change as I had felt within  
Expressed in outward things ; but soon I looked,  
And behold, thrones were kingless, and men  
walked

One with the other even as spirits do —  
None fawned, none trampled ; hate, disdain, or  
fear,

Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows  
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,  
“All hope abandon, ye who enter here.”  
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear  
Gazed on another's eye of cold command,  
Until the subject of a tyrant's will  
Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,  
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to  
death.

None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines  
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to  
speak.

None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart  
The sparks of love and hope till there remained  
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,  
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,  
Infecting all with his own hideous ill.  
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk  
Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes,

Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy  
 With such a self-mistrust as has no name.  
 And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind,  
 As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew  
 On the wide earth, passed ; gentle, radiant forms,  
 From custom's evil taint exempt and pure ;  
 Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,  
 Looking emotions once they feared to feel,  
 And changed to all which once they dared not be,  
 Yet being now, made earth like heaven ; nor pride,  
 Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,  
 The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,  
 Spoiled the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgment-seats, and prisons,  
     wherein,  
 And beside which, by wretched men were borne  
 Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes  
 Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,  
 Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,  
 The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame  
 Which from their unworn obelisks, look forth  
 In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs  
 Of those who were their conquerors ; mouldering  
     round,

Those imaged to the pride of kings and priests  
 A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide  
 As is the world it wasted, and are now  
 But an astonishment ; even so the tools  
 And emblems of its last captivity,  
 Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,  
 Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.

And those foul shapes,—abhorred by god and  
man,

Which, under many a name and many a form  
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark, and execrable,  
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world,  
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served  
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and  
love

Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,  
And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,  
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was  
hate, —

Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned  
shrines.

The painted veil, by those who were, called life,  
Which mimicked, as with colors idly spread,  
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside ;

The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains  
( Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man  
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,  
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king  
Over himself ; just, gentle, wise ; but man  
Passionless — no, yet free from guilt or pain,  
Which were, for his will made or suffered them ;  
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,  
From chance, and death, and mutability,  
The clogs of that which else might oversoar  
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,  
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

193 *fallen. The man remains, — Rossetti.*

194 *but man : Rossetti.*

197 *but man. Rossetti.*

198 *Passionless ? no : — Rossetti.*

## ACT IV

SCENE — *A part of the Forest near the Cave of PROMETHEUS.  
PANTHEA and IONE are sleeping : they awaken gradually during  
the first Song.*

## VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS

THE pale stars are gone !  
For the sun, their swift shepherd  
To their folds them compelling,  
In the depths of the dawn,  
Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee  
Beyond his blue dwelling,  
As fawns flee the leopard,  
But where are ye ?

*A Train of dark Forms and Shadows passes by confusedly,  
singing.*

Here, oh, here !  
We bear the bier  
Of the father of many a cancelled year !  
Spectres we  
Of the dead Hours be ;  
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew  
Hair, not yew !  
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew !  
Be the faded flowers  
Of Death's bare bowers  
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours !

Haste, oh, haste !  
As shades are chased,  
) Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste,  
We melt away,  
Like dissolving spray,  
From the children of a diviner day,  
With the lullaby  
Of winds that die  
On the bosom of their own harmony !

IONE

What dark forms were they ?

PANTHEA

The past Hours weak and gray,  
With the spoil which their toil  
Raked together  
From the conquest but One could foil.

IONE

Have they passed ?

PANTHEA

They have passed ;  
They outspeeded the blast,  
While 'tis said, they are fled !

IONE

Whither, oh, whither ?

PANTHEA

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

## VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS

Bright clouds float in heaven,  
Dew-stars gleam on earth,  
Waves assemble on ocean,  
They are gathered and driven  
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee !  
They shake with emotion,  
They dance in their mirth.  
But where are ye ?

The pine boughs are singing  
Old songs with new gladness,  
The billows and fountains  
Fresh music are flinging,  
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea ;  
The storms mock the mountains  
With the thunder of gladness,  
But where are ye ?

## IONE

What charioteers are these ?

## PANTHEA

Where are their chariots ?

## SEMICHORUS OF HOURS

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth  
Has drawn back the figured curtain of sleep,  
Which covered our being and darkened our birth  
In the deep.

## A VOICE

In the deep ?



SEMICHORUS II

Oh! below the deep.

SEMICHORUS I

An hundred ages we had been kept  
Cradled in visions of hate and care,  
And each one who waked as his brother slept  
Found the truth —

SEMICHORUS II

Worse than his visions were!

SEMICHORUS I

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep;  
We have known the voice of Love in dreams;  
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap —

SEMICHORUS II

As the billows leap in the morning beams!

CHORUS

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,  
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,  
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,  
To check its flight ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds  
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,  
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds  
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh, weave the mystic measure  
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,

Let the Hours, and the Spirits of might and pleasure,  
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite —

A VOICE

unite !

PANTHEA

See, where the Spirits of the human mind,  
Wrapped in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

We join the throng  
Of the dance and the song,  
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along ;  
As the flying-fish leap  
From the Indian deep  
And mix with the sea-birds half-asleep.

CHORUS OF HOURS

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,  
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,  
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,  
And your eyes are as love which is veiled not ?

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

We come from the mind  
Of humankind,  
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind ;  
Now 'tis an ocean  
Of clear emotion,  
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss  
Of wonder and bliss,

Whose caverns are crystal palaces ;  
From those skyey towers ~~of~~ *skiet*  
Where Thought's crowned powers  
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours !

From the dim recesses  
Of woven caresses,  
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses ;  
From the azure isles,  
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,  
Delaying your ships with her siren wiles.

From the temples high  
Of Man's ear and eye,  
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy ;  
From the murmurings  
Of the unsealed springs.  
Where Science bedews his dædal wings.

Years after years,  
Through blood, and tears,  
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears,  
We waded and flew,  
And the islets were few  
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness  
grew.

Our feet now, every palm,  
Are sandalled with calm,  
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm ;  
And, beyond our eyes,  
The human love lies,  
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

## CHORUS OF SPIRITS AND HOURS

Then weave the web of the mystic measure ;  
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the  
earth,  
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,  
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,  
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by  
To an ocean of splendor and harmony !

## CHORUS OF SPIRITS

Our spoil is won,  
Our task is done,  
We are free to dive, or soar, or run ;  
Beyond and around,  
Or within the bound  
Which clips the world with darkness round.

We'll pass the eyes  
Of the starry skies  
Into the hoar deep to colonize ;  
Death, Chaos and Night,  
From the sound of our flight,  
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air and Light,  
And the Spirit of Might,  
Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight ;  
And Love, Thought and Breath,  
The powers that quell Death,  
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build  
In the void's loose field

A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;  
We will take our plan  
From the new world of man,  
And our work shall be called the Promethean.

## CHORUS OF HOURS

Break the dance, and scatter the song;  
Let some depart, and some remain;

## SEMICHORUS I

We, beyond heaven, are driven along;

## SEMICHORUS II

Us the enchantments of earth retain;

## SEMICHORUS I

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,  
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,  
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be;

## SEMICHORUS II

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,  
Leading the Day, and outspeeding the Night,  
With the powers of a world of perfect light;

## SEMICHORUS I

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,  
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear  
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear;

## SEMICHORUS II

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,  
And the happy forms of its death and birth  
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

## CHORUS OF HOURS AND SPIRITS

Break the dance, and scatter the song ;  
Let some depart, and some remain ;  
Wherever we fly we lead along  
In leashes, like star-beams, soft yet strong,  
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

## PANTHEA

Ha ! they are gone !

## IONE

Yet feel you no delight  
From the past sweetness ?

## PANTHEA

As the bare green hill,  
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,  
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water  
To the unpavilioned sky !

## IONE

Even whilst we speak  
New notes arise. What is that awful sound ?

## PANTHEA

'Tis the deep music of the rolling world,  
Kindling within the strings of the waved air  
Æolian modulations.

## IONE

Listen too,  
How every pause is filled with under-notes,  
Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones,  
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,

As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air  
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

## PANTHEA

But see where, through two openings in the forest  
Which hanging branches overcanopy,  
And where two runnels of a rivulet,  
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,  
Have made their path of melody, like sisters  
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,  
Turning their dear disunion to an isle  
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts ;  
Two visions of strange radiance float upon  
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,  
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet,  
Under the ground and through the windless air.

## IONE

I see a chariot like that thinnest boat  
In which the mother of the months is borne  
By ebbing night into her western cave,  
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams ;  
O'er which is curved an orb-like canopy  
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods,  
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,  
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass ;  
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,  
Such as the genii of the thunder-storm  
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea  
When the sun rushes under it ; they roll  
And move and grow as with an inward wind ;  
Within it sits a wingèd infant — white  
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,

Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,  
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing  
folds

Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl,  
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light  
Scattered in strings ; yet its two eyes are heavens  
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity  
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured  
From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,  
Tempering the cold and radiant air around  
With fire that is not brightness ; in its hand  
It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point  
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow  
Over its wheelèd clouds, which as they roll  
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake  
sounds,  
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

## PANTHEA

And from the other opening in the wood  
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,  
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres ;  
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass  
Flow, as through empty space, music and light ;  
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,  
Purple and azure, white, green and golden,  
Sphere within sphere ; and every space between  
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,  
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep ;  
Yet each inter-transpicuous ; and they whirl  
Over each other with a thousand motions,  
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,



And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,  
Intensely, slowly, solemnly, roll on,  
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,  
Intelligible words and music wild.  
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb  
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist  
Of elemental subtlety, like light ;  
And the wild odor of the forest flowers,  
The music of the living grass and air,  
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams,  
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed  
Seem kneaded into one aërial mass  
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,  
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,  
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,  
On its own folded wings and wavy hair  
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,  
And you can see its little lips are moving,  
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,  
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

## IONE

'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

## PANTHEA

And from a star upon its forehead shoot,  
Like swords of azure fire or golden spears  
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwin'd,  
Embleming heaven and earth united now,  
Vast beams like spokes of some invisible whcel  
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than  
thought,  
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,

And perpendicular now, and now transverse,  
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and  
pass

Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart ;  
Infinite mine of adamant and gold,  
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,  
And caverns on crystalline columns poised  
With vegetable silver overspread ;  
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water-springs  
Whence the great sea even as a child is fed,  
Whose vapors clothe earth's monarch mountain-  
tops

With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on  
And make appear the melancholy ruins  
Of cancelled cycles ; anchors, beaks of ships ;  
Planks turned to marble ; quivers, helms, and  
spears,

And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels  
Of scythèd chariots, and the emblazonry  
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,  
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems  
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin !  
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,  
Whose population which the earth grew over  
Was mortal, but not human ; see, they lie,  
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,  
Their statues, homes and fanes ; prodigious shapes  
Huddled in gray annihilation, split,  
Jammed in the hard, black deep ; and over these,  
The anatomies of unknown wingèd things,  
And fishes which were isles of living scale,  
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around

*294 emblems these, Forman conj.*

The iron crags, or within heaps of dust  
To which the tortuous strength of their last  
pangs

Had crushed the iron crags ; and over these  
The jagged alligator, and the might  
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once  
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,  
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,  
Increased and multiplied like summer worms  
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe  
Wrapped deluge round it like a cloke, and they  
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished ; or some  
God,

Whose throne was in a comet, passed, and cried,  
Be not ! and like my words they were no more.

#### THE EARTH

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness !  
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,  
The vaporous exultation not to be confined !

Ha ! ha ! the animation of delight  
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,  
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

#### THE MOON

Brother mine, calm wanderer,  
Happy globe of land and air,  
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,  
Which penetrates my frozen frame,  
And passes with the warmth of flame,  
With love, and odor, and deep melody  
Through me, through me !

## THE EARTH

Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,  
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains,  
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.  
The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,  
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,  
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing  
after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse,  
Who all our green and azure universe  
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction,  
sending  
A solid cloud to rain hot thunder-stones  
And splinter and knead down my children's  
bones,  
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and  
blending,

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,  
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,  
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and  
snow, and fire,  
My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom  
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,  
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless  
mire:

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up  
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup  
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all;  
And from beneath, around, within, above,

Filling thy void annihilation, love  
Bursts in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-  
ball!

## THE MOON

The snow upon my lifeless mountains  
Is loosened into living fountains,  
My solid oceans flow, and sing and shine ;  
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,  
It clothes with unexpected birth  
My cold bare bosom. Oh, it must be thine  
On mine, on mine !

Gazing on thee I feel, I know,  
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers  
grow,  
And living shapes upon my bosom move ;  
Music is in the sea and air,  
Wingèd clouds soar here and there  
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of :  
'Tis love, all love !

## THE EARTH

It interpenetrates my granite mass,  
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass  
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers ;  
Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,  
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead, —  
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest  
bowers ;

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison  
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen  
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being ;

With earthquake shock and swiftness making  
shiver  
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved forever,  
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished  
shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror  
Which could distort to many a shape of error  
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love ;  
Which over all his kind, as the sun's heaven  
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,  
Darting from starry depths radiance and life doth  
move :

Leave Man even as a leprous child is left,  
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft  
Of rocks, through which the might of healing  
springs is poured ;  
Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,  
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile  
It is a spirit, then weeps on her child restored :

Man, oh, not men ! a chain of linkèd thought,  
Of love and might to be divided not,  
Compelling the elements with adamant stress ;  
As the sun rules even with a tyrant's gaze  
The unquiet republic of the maze  
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free  
wilderness :

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul, )  
Whose nature is its own divine control,

387 *life*, Boscombe MS. || *light*, Shelley, 1820.

Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea ;  
Familiar acts are beautiful through love ;  
Labor, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove  
Sport like tame beasts ; none knew how gentle they  
could be !

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,  
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,  
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,  
Is as a tempest-wingèd ship, whose helm  
Love rules, through waves which dare not over-  
whelm,  
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign  
sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the  
cold mass  
Of marble and of color his dreams pass —  
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes  
their children wear ;  
Language is a perpetual Orphic song,  
Which rules with dædal harmony a throng  
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and  
shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave ; heaven's utmost deep  
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep  
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll  
on !

The tempest is his steed, he strides the air ;  
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,  
“Heaven, hast thou secrets ? Man unveils me ; I  
have none.”

## THE MOON

The shadow of white death has passed  
From my path in heaven at last,  
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep ;  
And through my newly woven bowers,  
Wander happy paramours,  
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep  
Thy vales more deep.

## THE EARTH

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold  
A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,  
And crystalline, till it becomes a wingèd mist,  
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,  
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray  
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

## THE MOON

Thou art folded, thou art lying  
In the light which is undying  
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine ;  
All suns and constellations shower  
On thee a light, a life, a power,  
Which doth array thy sphere ; thou pourest  
thine  
On mine, on mine !

## THE EARTH

I spin beneath my pyramid of night  
Which points into the heavens, dreaming delight,  
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep ;

432 unfrozen, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || infrozen, Shelley, 1820.



As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sigh-  
ing,  
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,  
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth  
doth keep.

## THE MOON

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,  
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,  
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull ;  
So when thy shadow falls on me,  
Then am I mute and still, by thee  
Covered ; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,  
Full, oh, too full !

Thou art speeding round the sun,  
Brightest world of many a one ;  
Green and azure sphere which shinest  
With a light which is divinest  
Among all the lamps of Heaven  
To whom life and light is given ;  
I, thy crystal paramour,  
Borne beside thee by a power  
Like the polar Paradise,  
Magnet-like, of lovers' eyes ;  
I, a most enamoured maiden,  
Whose weak brain is overladen  
With the pleasure of her love,  
Maniac-like around thee move,  
Gazing, an insatiate bride,  
On thy form from every side,  
Like a Mænad round the cup  
Which Agave lifted up  
In the weird Cadmean forest.

Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest  
I must hurry, whirl and follow  
Through the heavens wide and hollow,  
Sheltered by the warm embrace  
Of thy soul from hungry space,  
Drinking from thy sense and sight  
Beauty, majesty and might,  
As a lover or a chameleon  
Grows like what it looks upon,  
As a violet's gentle eye  
Gazes on the azure sky  
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,  
As a gray and watery mist  
Glow like solid amethyst  
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,  
When the sunset sleeps  
Upon its snow.

## THE EARTH

And the weak day weeps  
That it should be so.  
O gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight  
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light  
Soothing the seaman borne the summer night  
Through isles forever calm ;  
O gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce  
The caverns of my pride's deep universe,  
Charming the tiger joy, whose trappings fierce  
Made wounds which need thy balm.

## PANTHEA

I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,

483 *or a*, Shelley, 1820 || *or*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,  
Out of the stream of sound.

IONE

Ah me! sweet sister,  
The stream of sound has ebbd away from us,  
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,  
Because your words fall like the clear soft dew  
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and  
hair.

PANTHEA

Peace, peace! a mighty Power, which is as darkness,  
Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky  
Is showered like night, and from within the air  
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up  
Into the pores of sunlight; the bright visions,  
Wherein the singing Spirits rode and shone,  
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

IONE

There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

PANTHEA

An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

DEMOGORGON

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,  
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,  
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll  
The love which paves thy path along the skies:

THE EARTH

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

## DEMOGORGON

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth  
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee ;  
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift  
birth  
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony :

## THE MOON

I hear : I am a leaf shaken by thee.

## DEMOGORGON

Ye kings of suns and stars, Dæmons and Gods,  
Ethereal Dominations, who possess  
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes  
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness :

A VOICE (*from above*)

Our great Republic hears : we are blessed, and  
bless.

## DEMOGORGON

Ye happy dead, whom beams of brightest verse  
Are clouds to hide, not colors to portray,  
Whether your nature is that universe  
Which once ye saw and suffered —

## A VOICE FROM BENEATH

Or, as they  
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

## DEMOGORGON

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes  
From man's high mind even to the central stone

Of sullen lead ; from Heaven's star-fretted domes  
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on :

## A CONFUSED VOICE

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

## DEMOGORGON

Spirits, whose homes are flesh ; ye beasts and  
birds,  
Ye worms and fish ; ye living leaves and buds ;  
Lightning and wind ; and ye untamable herds,  
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes :

## A VOICE

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

## DEMOGORGON

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave,  
A dupe and a deceiver, a decay,  
A traveller from the cradle to the grave  
Through the dim night of this immortal day :

## ALL

Speak : thy strong words may never pass away.

## DEMOGORGON

This is the day which down the void abysm  
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's des-  
potism,  
And Conquest is dragged captive through the  
deep ;  
Love, from its awful throne of patient power  
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour

Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,  
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs  
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance —  
These are the seals of that most firm assurance  
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;  
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,  
Mother of many acts and hours, should free  
The serpent that would clasp her with his  
length,  
These are the spells by which to reassume  
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;  
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;  
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;  
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!

559 *dread*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *dead*, Shelley, 1820.



# **THE CENCI**

**A TRAGEDY**

**IN FIVE ACTS**



*The Cenci* was published, with Shelley's name, at London, in the spring of 1820 by C. & J. Ollier, in an edition of two hundred and fifty copies printed in Italy, probably at the press of Masi, at Leghorn. The drama was begun at Rome, by May 14, 1819, and continued at the Villa Valsovano, near Leghorn, where it was finished, August 8, and immediately revised for the Italian printer. It was meant to be put on the stage before publication, and is said to have been refused by Covent Garden and Drury Lane. A second edition was issued at London, in 1821, by Ollier, with the imprint of C. H. Reynell, the text of which embodies Shelley's corrections, published by Forman, and is to be received as standard.

## DEDICATION

TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I inscribe with your name, from a distant country, and after an absence whose months have seemed years, this the latest of my literary efforts.

Those writings which I have hitherto published have been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just. I can also perceive in them the literary defects incidental to youth and impatience ; they are dreams of what ought to be or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor and am content to paint, with such colors as my own heart furnishes, that which has been.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honorable, innocent and brave ; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil ; one who knows better how to receive and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive ; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners, I never knew ; and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

In that patient and irreconcilable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture which the tenor of your life has illustrated, and which, had I health and talents, should illustrate mine, let us, comforting each other in our task, live and die.

All happiness attend you !

Your affectionate friend,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

ROME, May 29, 1819.

## PREFACE

A MANUSCRIPT was communicated to me during my travels in Italy, which was copied from the archives of the Cenci Palace at Rome and contains a detailed account of the horrors which ended in the extinction of one of the noblest and richest families of that city, during the Pontificate of Clement VIII., in the year 1599. The story is that an old man, having spent his life in debauchery and wickedness, conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children ; which showed itself towards one daughter under the form of an incestuous passion, aggravated by every circumstance of cruelty and violence. This daughter, after long and vain attempts to escape from what she considered a perpetual contamination both of body and mind, at length plotted with her mother-in-law and brother to murder their common tyrant. The young maiden who was urged to this tremendous deed by an impulse which overpowered its horror was evidently a most gentle and amiable being, a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstance and opinion. The deed was quickly discovered, and, in spite of the most earnest prayers made to the Pope by the highest persons in Rome, the criminals were put to death. The old man had during his life repeatedly bought his pardon from the Pope for capital crimes of the most enormous and unspeakable kind at the price of a hundred thousand crowns ; the death therefore of his victims can scarcely be accounted for by the love of justice. The Pope, among other motives for severity, probably felt that whoever killed the Count Cenci deprived his treasury of a certain and copious source of revenue.<sup>1</sup> Such a story, if told so as to present to the

<sup>1</sup> The Papal Government formerly took the most extraordinary precautions against the publicity of facts which offer so tragical

reader all the feelings of those who once acted it, their hopes and fears, their confidences and misgivings, their various interests, passions and opinions, acting upon and with each other yet all conspiring to one tremendous end, would be as a light to make apparent some of the most dark and secret caverns of the human heart.

On my arrival at Rome I found that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest ; and that the feelings of the company never failed to incline to a romantic pity for the wrongs and a passionate exculpation of the horrible deed to which they urged her who has been mingled two centuries with the common dust. All ranks of people knew the outlines of this history and participated in the overwhelming interest which it seems to have the magic of exciting in the human heart. I had a copy of Guido's picture of Beatrice which is preserved in the Colonna Palace, and my servant instantly recognized it as the portrait of *La Cenci*.

This national and universal interest which the story produces and has produced for two centuries and among all ranks of people in a great City, where the imagination is kept forever active and awake, first suggested to me the conception of its fitness for a dramatic purpose. In fact it is a tragedy which has already received, from its capacity of awakening and sustaining the sympathy of men, approbation and success. Nothing remained as I imagined but to clothe it to the apprehensions of my countrymen in such language and action as would bring it home to their hearts. The deepest and the sublimest tragic compositions, King Lear and the two plays in which the tale of *Œdipus* is told, were stories which already existed in tradition, as matters of popular belief and interest, before Shakespeare and Sophocles made them familiar to the sympathy of all succeeding generations of mankind.

This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous ; anything like a dry exhibition of it on the a demonstration of its own wickedness and weakness ; so that the communication of the MS. had become, until very lately, a matter of some difficulty.

stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal and diminish the actual horror of the events, so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring. There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself ; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well : but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them. Undoubtedly no person can be truly dishonored by the act of another ; and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love. Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better ; but she would never have been a tragic character. The few whom such an exhibition would have interested could never have been sufficiently interested for a dramatic purpose, from the want of finding sympathy in their interest among the mass who surround them. It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification ; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, — that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered, consists.

I have endeavored as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or wrong, false or true : thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. They are represented as Catholics, and as Catholics deeply tinged with religion. To a Protestant apprehension there will appear something un-

natural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and men which pervade the tragedy of the Cenci. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days ; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit ; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion coexists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic, with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration ; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and without any shock to established faith confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is, according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge ; never a check. Cenci himself built a chapel in the court of his Palace, and dedicated it to St. Thomas the Apostle, and established masses for the peace of his soul. Thus in the first scene of the fourth act Lucretia's design in exposing herself to the consequences of an expostulation with Cenci after having administered the opiate was to induce him by a feigned tale to confess himself before death, this being esteemed by Catholics as essential to salvation ; and she only relinquishes her purpose when she perceives that her perseverance would expose Beatrice to new outrages.

I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An idea in this speech was suggested by a most sublime pas-

In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects I have written more carelessly ; that is, without an overfastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men, and that our great ancestors the ancient English poets are the writers, a study of whom might incite us to do that for our own age which they have done for theirs. But it must be the real language of men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong. So much for what I have attempted ; I need not be assured that success is a very different matter ; particularly for one whose attention has but newly been awakened to the study of dramatic literature.

I endeavored whilst at Rome to observe such monuments of this story as might be accessible to a stranger. The portrait of Beatrice at the Colonna Palace is admirable as a work of art ; it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison. But it is most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature. There is a fixed and pale composure upon the features ; she seems sad and stricken down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is lightened by the patience of gentleness. Her head is bound with folds of white drapery from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape and fall about her neck. The moulding of her face is exquisitely delicate ; the eyebrows are distinct and arched ; the lips sage in " *El Purgatorio de San Patricio* " of Calderon ; the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed in the whole piece.

have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish. Her forehead is large and clear; her eyes, which we are told were remarkable for their vivacity, are swollen with weeping and lustreless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which, united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow, are inexpressibly pathetic. Beatrice Cenci appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another; her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and miseries in which she was an actor and a sufferer are as the mask and the mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world.

The Cenci Palace is of great extent; and, though in part modernized, there yet remains a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture in the same state as during the dreadful scenes which are the subject of this tragedy. The Palace is situated in an obscure corner of Rome, near the quarter of the Jews, and from the upper windows you see the immense ruins of Mount Palatine half hidden under their profuse overgrowth of trees. There is a court in one part of the Palace (perhaps that in which Cenci built the Chapel to St. Thomas), supported by granite columns and adorned with antique friezes of fine workmanship, and built up, according to the ancient Italian fashion, with balcony over balcony of openwork. One of the gates of the Palace formed of immense stones and leading through a passage, dark and lofty and opening into gloomy subterranean chambers, struck me particularly.

Of the Castle of Petrella, I could obtain no further information than that which is to be found in the manuscript.



# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

COUNT FRANCESCO CENCI.	OLIMPIO, }	
GIACOMO, }	MARZIO, }	Assassins.
BERNARDO, }		his Sons.
CARDINAL CAMILLO.	ANDREA,	Servant to CENCI.
PRINCE COLONNA. <sup>1</sup>	NOBLES. JUDGES. GUARDS.	
ORSINO, a Prelate.	SERVANTS.	
SAVELLA, the Pope's Legate.	LUCRETIA,	Wife of CENCI and
	Stepmother of his children.	
	BEATRICE,	his Daughter.

The SCENE lies principally in Rome, but changes during the fourth Act to Petrella, a castle among the Apulian Apennines.

TIME. During the Pontificate of Clement VIII.

<sup>1</sup> PRINCE COLONNA, omit, Shelley, 1819, 1821.

## THE CENCI

### ACT I

SCENE I. — *An Apartment in the CENCI Palace. Enter COUNT CENCI and CARDINAL CAMILLO.*

CAMILLO

THAT matter of the murder is hushed up  
If you consent to yield his Holiness  
Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.  
It needed all my interest in the conclave  
To bend him to this point ; he said that you  
Bought perilous impunity with your gold ;  
That crimes like yours if once or twice compounded  
Enriched the Church, and respited from hell  
An erring soul which might repent and live ;  
But that the glory and the interest  
Of the high throne he fills little consist  
With making it a daily mart of guilt  
As manifold and hideous as the deeds  
Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.

CENCI

The third of my possessions — let it go !  
Ay, I once heard the nephew of the Pope  
Had sent his architect to view the ground,  
Meaning to build a villa on my vines  
The next time I compounded with his uncle.

I little thought he should outwit me so!  
 Henceforth no witness — not the lamp — shall see  
 That which the vassal threatened to divulge,  
 Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward.  
 The deed he saw could not have rated higher  
 Than his most worthless life — it angers me!  
 Respited me from Hell! So may the Devil  
 Respite their souls from Heaven! No doubt Pope  
     Clement,  
 And his most charitable nephews, pray  
 That the Apostle Peter and the saints  
 Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy  
 Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length  
     of days  
 Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards  
 Of their revenue. — But much yet remains  
 To which they show no title.

## CAMILLO

  Oh, Count Cenci!  
 So much that thou mightst honorably live  
 And reconcile thyself with thine own heart  
 And with thy God and with the offended world.  
 How hideously look deeds of lust and blood  
 Through those snow-white and venerable hairs!  
 Your children should be sitting round you now  
 But that you fear to read upon their looks  
 The shame and misery you have written there.  
 Where is your wife? Where is your gentle  
     daughter?

25 *Than*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *That*, Shelley, 1819, 1821.

26 *me*, Shelley Errata, Shelley, 1821 || *omit*, Shelley, 1819.

35 *you might*, Rossetti.

Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things  
else

Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you.  
Why is she barred from all society  
But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs ?  
Talk with me, Count, — you know I mean you well.  
I stood beside your dark and fiery youth,  
Watching its bold and bad career, as men  
Watch meteors, but it vanished not ; I marked  
Your desperate and remorseless manhood ; now  
Do I behold you in dishonored age  
Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.  
Yet I have ever hoped you would amend,  
And in that hope have saved your life three times.

## CENCI

For which Aldobrandino owes you now  
My fief beyond the Pincian. Cardinal,  
One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth,  
And so we shall converse with less restraint.  
A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter ;  
He was accustomed to frequent my house ;  
So the next day *his* wife and daughter came  
And asked if I had seen him ; and I smiled.  
I think they never saw him any more.

## CAMILLO

Thou execrable man, beware !

## CENCI

Of thee ?

Nay, this is idle. We should know each other.  
As to my character for what men call crime,  
Seeing I please my senses as I list,

And vindicate that right with force or guile,  
It is a public matter, and I care not  
If I discuss it with you. I may speak  
Alike to you and my own conscious heart,  
For you give out that you have half reformed me ;  
Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent,  
If fear should not ; both will, I do not doubt.  
All men delight in sensual luxury ;  
All men enjoy revenge, and most exult  
Over the tortures they can never feel,  
Flattering their secret peace with others' pain.  
But I delight in nothing else. I love  
The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,  
When this shall be another's and that mine ;  
And I have no remorse and little fear,  
Which are, I think, the checks of other men.  
This mood has grown upon me, until now  
Any design my captious fancy makes  
The picture of its wish — and it forms none  
But such as men like you would start to know —  
Is as my natural food and rest debarred  
Until it be accomplished.

CAMILLO

Art thou not

Most miserable?

CENCI

Why miserable?

No. I am what your theologians call  
Hardened ; which they must be in impudence,  
So to revile a man's peculiar taste.  
True, I was happier than I am, while yet  
Manhood remained to act the thing I thought, —

While lust was sweeter than revenge ; and now  
 Invention palls. Ay, we must all grow old.  
 And but that there remains a deed to act  
 Whose horror might make sharp an appetite  
 Duller than mine — I'd do, — I know not what.  
 When I was young I thought of nothing else  
 But pleasure ; and I fed on honey sweets.  
 Men, by St. Thomas ! cannot live like bees, —  
 And I grew tired ; yet, till I killed a foe,  
 And heard his groans, and heard his children's  
     groans,  
 Knew I not what delight was else on earth, —  
 Which now delights me little. I the rather  
 Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals —  
 The dry, fixed eyeball, the pale, quivering lip,  
 Which tell me that the spirit weeps within  
 Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.  
 I rarely kill the body, which preserves,  
 Like a strong prison, the soul within my power,  
 Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear  
 For hourly pain.

CAMILLO

Hell's most abandoned fiend  
 Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,  
 Speak to his heart as now you speak to me.  
 I thank my God that I believe you not.

*Enter* ANDREA

ANDREA

My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca  
 Would speak with you.

100 *And but that there*, Shelley Errata || *And but that there yet*,  
 Shelley, 1821, *But that there yet*, Shelley, 1819.

CENCI

Bid him attend me  
In the grand saloon.

[*Exit* ANDREA.]

CAMILLO

Farewell; and I will pray  
Almighty God that thy false, impious words  
Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee.

[*Exit* CAMILLO.]

CENCI

The third of my possessions! I must use  
Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword,  
Falls from my withered hand. But yesterday  
There came an order from the Pope to make  
Fourfold provision for my cursèd sons,  
Whom I had sent from Rome to Salamanca,  
Hoping some accident might cut them off,  
And meaning, if I could, to starve them there.  
I pray thee, God, send some quick death upon  
them!

Bernardo and my wife could not be worse  
If dead and damned. Then, as to Beatrice —

[*Looking around him suspiciously.*]

I think they cannot hear me at that door.  
What if they should? And yet I need not  
speak,  
Though the heart triumphs with itself in words.  
O thou most silent air, that shalt not hear

131 *had*, Shelley Errata, Shelley, 1821 || *have*, Shelley, 1819.140 *shalt*. Shelley Errata, Shelley, 1821 || *shall*, Shelley, 1819.

What now I think! Thou pavement which I  
tread

Towards her chamber, — let your echoes talk  
Of my imperious step, scorning surprise,  
But not of my intent! — Andrea!

*Enter ANDREA*

ANDREA

My Lord?

CENCI

Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber  
This evening: — no, at midnight and alone.

*[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II. — *A Garden of the Cenci Palace. Enter BEATRICE  
and ORSINO, as in conversation.*

BEATRICE

Pervert not truth,  
Orsino. You remember where we held  
That conversation; nay, we see the spot  
Even from this cypress; two long years are  
passed  
Since, on an April midnight, underneath  
The moonlight ruins of Mount Palatine,  
I did confess to you my secret mind.

ORSINO

You said you loved me then.

BEATRICE

You are a priest.

Speak to me not of love.



## ORSINO

I may obtain  
The dispensation of the Pope to marry.  
Because I am a priest do you believe  
Your image, as the hunter some struck deer,  
Follows me not whether I wake or sleep ?

## BEATRICE

As I have said, speak to me not of love ;  
Had you a dispensation, I have not ;  
Nor will I leave this home of misery  
Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady  
To whom I owe life and these virtuous thoughts,  
Must suffer what I still have strength to share.  
Alas, Orsino ! All the love that once  
I felt for you is turned to bitter pain.  
Ours was a youthful contract, which you first  
Broke by assuming vows no Pope will loose.  
And thus I love you still, but holily,  
Even as a sister or a spirit might ;  
And so I swear a cold fidelity.  
And it is well perhaps we shall not marry.  
You have a sly, equivocating vein  
That suits me not. — Ah, wretched that I am !  
Where shall I turn ? Even now you look on  
me  
As you were not my friend, and as if you  
Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles  
Making my true suspicion seem your wrong.  
Ah, no, forgive me ; sorrow makes me seem



Poor lady! she expects some happy change  
In his dark spirit from this act; I none.  
At supper I will give you the petition;  
Till when — farewell.

ORSINO

Farewell.

[*Exit BEATRICE.*]

I know the Pope

Will ne'er absolve me from my priestly vow  
But by absolving me from the revenue  
Of many a wealthy see; and, Beatrice,  
I think to win thee at an easier rate.  
Nor shall he read her eloquent petition.  
He might bestow her on some poor relation  
Of his sixth cousin, as he did her sister,  
And I should be debarred from all access.  
Then as to what she suffers from her father,  
In all this there is much exaggeration.  
Old men are testy, and will have their way.  
A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal,  
And live a free life as to wine or women,  
And with a peevish temper may return  
To a dull home, and rate his wife and children;  
Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.  
I shall be well content if on my conscience  
There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer  
From the devices of my love — a net  
From which she shall escape not. Yet I fear  
Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze,  
Whose beams anatomize me, nerve by nerve,

And lay me bare, and make me blush to see  
My hidden thoughts. — Ah, no! a friendless girl  
Who clings to me, as to her only hope!  
I were a fool, not less than if a panther  
Were panic-stricken by the antelope's eye,  
If she escape me.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III. — *A magnificent Hall in the Cenci Palace. A Banquet. Enter CENCI, LUORETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO, CAMILLO, NOBLES.*

CENCI

Welcome, my friends and kinsmen ; welcome ye,  
Princes and Cardinals, pillars of the church,  
Whose presence honors our festivity.  
I have too long lived like an anchorite,  
And in my absence from your merry meetings  
An evil word is gone abroad of me ;  
But I do hope that you, my noble friends,  
When you have shared the entertainment here,  
And heard the pious cause for which 'tis given,  
And we have pledged a health or two together,  
Will think me flesh and blood as well as you ;  
Sinful indeed, for Adam made all so,  
But tender-hearted, meek and pitiful.

FIRST GUEST

In truth, my Lord, you seem too light of heart,  
Too sprightly and companionable a man,  
To act the deeds that rumor pins on you.

[*To his companion.*

I never saw such blithe and open cheer  
In any eye !

Ah! My blood runs cold.  
I fear that wicked laughter round his eye,  
Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.

## CENCI

Here are the letters brought from Salamanca.  
 Beatrice, read them to your mother. God !  
 I thank thee ! In one night didst thou perform,  
 By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.  
 My disobedient and rebellious sons  
 Are dead ! — Why, dead ! — What means this  
     change of cheer ?  
 You hear me not — I tell you they are dead ;  
 And they will need no food or raiment more ;  
 The tapers that did light them the dark way  
 Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not  
 Expect I should maintain them in their coffins.  
 Rejoice with me — my heart is wondrous glad.

BEATRICE (*LUCRETIA sinks, half fainting; BEATRICE supports her*)

It is not true ! — Dear Lady, pray look up.  
 Had it been true — there is a God in Heaven —  
 He would not live to boast of such a boon.  
 Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.

## CENCI

Ay, as the word of God ; whom here I call  
 To witness that I speak the sober truth ;  
 And whose most favoring providence was shown  
 Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco  
 Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others,  
 When the church fell and crushed him to a  
     mummy ;  
 The rest escaped unhurt. Cristofano  
 Was stabbed in error by a jealous man,

Whilst she he loved was sleeping with his rival,  
 All in the self-same hour of the same night ;  
 Which shows that Heaven has special care of me.  
 I beg those friends who love me that they mark  
 The day a feast upon their calendars.  
 It was the twenty-seventh of December.  
 Ay, read the letters if you doubt my oath.

*[The assembly appears confused ; several of the guests rise.]*

FIRST GUEST

Oh, horrible ! I will depart.

SECOND GUEST

And I.

THIRD GUEST

No, stay !

I do believe it is some jest ; though, faith !  
 'Tis mocking us somewhat too solemnly.  
 I think his son has married the Infanta,  
 Or found a mine of gold in El Dorado.  
 'Tis but to season some such news ; stay, stay !  
 I see 'tis only raillery by his smile.

CENCI (*filling a bowl of wine, and lifting it up*)

O thou bright wine, whose purple splendor leaps  
 And bubbles gayly in this golden bowl  
 Under the lamp-light, as my spirits do,  
 To hear the death of my accursèd sons !  
 Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,  
 Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,  
 And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell,  
 Who, if a father's curses, as men say,

Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,  
And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,  
Now triumphs in my triumph! — But thou art  
Superfluous ; I have drunken deep of joy,  
And I will taste no other wine to-night.  
Here, Andrea! Bear the bowl around.

A GUEST (*rising*)

Thou wretch!

Will none among this noble company  
Check the abandoned villain?

CAMILLO

For God's sake,  
Let me dismiss the guests! You are insane.  
Some ill will come of this.

SECOND GUEST

Seize, silence him!

FIRST GUEST

I will!

THIRD GUEST

And I!

CENCI (*addressing those who rise with a threatening gesture*)

Who moves? Who speaks?

[*Turning to the company.*

'Tis nothing,

Enjoy yourselves. — Beware! for my revenge  
Is as the sealed commission of a king,  
That kills, and none dare name the murderer.

[*The Banquet is broken up; several of the Guests are departing.*



## BEATRICE

I do entreat you, go not, noble guests ;  
What although tyranny and impious hate  
Stand sheltered by a father's hoary hair ?  
What if 'tis he who clothed us in these limbs  
Who tortures them, and triumphs ? What, if we,  
The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,  
His children and his wife, whom he is bound  
To love and shelter ? Shall we therefore find  
No refuge in this merciless wide world ?  
Oh, think what deep wrongs must have blotted out  
First love, then reverence, in a child's prone mind,  
Till it thus vanquish shame and fear ! Oh, think !  
I have borne much, and kissed the sacred hand  
Which crushed us to the earth, and thought its  
stroke  
Was perhaps some paternal chastisement !  
Have excused much, doubted ; and when no doubt  
Remained, have sought by patience, love and tears  
To soften him ; and when this could not be,  
I have knelt down through the long sleepless  
nights,  
And lifted up to God, the father of all,  
Passionate prayers ; and when these were not  
heard,  
I have still borne, — until I meet you here,  
Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast  
Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain ;  
His wife remains and I, whom if ye save not,  
Ye may soon share such merriment again  
As fathers make over their children's graves.

Oh! Prince Colonna, thou art our near kinsman;  
Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain;  
Camillo, thou art chief justiciary;  
Take us away!

CENCI (*he has been conversing with CAMILLO during the first part of BEATRICE'S speech; he hears the conclusion, and now advances*)

I hope my good friends here  
Will think of their own daughters — or perhaps  
Of their own throats — before they lend an ear  
To this wild girl.

BEATRICE (*not noticing the words of CENCI*)

Dare no one look on me?  
None answer? Can one tyrant overbear  
The sense of many best and wisest men?  
Or is it that I sue not in some form  
Of scrupulous law that ye deny my suit?  
Oh, God! that I were buried with my brothers!  
And that the flowers of this departed spring  
Were fading on my grave! and that my father  
Were celebrating now one feast for all!

CAMILLO

A bitter wish for one so young and gentle.  
Can we do nothing? —

COLONNA

Nothing that I see.  
Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy;  
Yet I would second any one.

A CARDINAL

And I.

CENCI

Retire to your chamber, insolent girl !

BEATRICE

Retire thou, impious man ! Ay, hide thyself  
Where never eye can look upon thee more !  
Wouldst thou have honor and obedience,  
Who art a torturer ? Father, never dream,  
Though thou mayst overbear this company,  
But ill must come of ill. Frown not on me !  
Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks  
My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy  
seat !

Cover thy face from every living eye,  
And start if thou but hear a human step ;  
Seek out some dark and silent corner — there  
Bow thy white head before offended God,  
And we will kneel around, and fervently  
Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.

CENCI

My friends, I do lament this insane girl  
Has spoiled the mirth of our festivity.  
Good night, farewell ; I will not make you  
longer  
Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels.  
Another time. —

[*Exeunt all but CENCI and BEATRICE.*]

My brain is swimming round.  
Give me a bowl of wine !

(To BEATRICE)

Thou painted viper !  
Beast that thou art ! Fair and yet terrible !  
I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame,  
Now get thee from my sight !

[Exit BEATRICE.]

Here, Andrea,

Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said  
I would not drink this evening, but I must ;  
For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail  
With thinking what I have decreed to do.

(Drinking the wine)

Be thou the resolution of quick youth  
Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,  
And age's firm, cold, subtle villainy ;  
As if thou wert indeed my children's blood  
Which I did thirst to drink ! The charm works  
well.

It must be done ; it shall be done, I swear !

[Exit.]

## ACT II

SCENE I. — *An Apartment in the Cenci Palace. Enter LUCRETIA and BERNARDO.*

LUCRETIA

WEEP not, my gentle boy ; he struck but me,  
Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he  
Had killed me, he had done a kinder deed.  
O God Almighty, do thou look upon us,  
We have no other friend but only thee !  
Yet weep not ; though I love you as my own,  
I am not your true mother.

BERNARDO

Oh, more, more  
Than ever mother was to any child,  
That have you been to me ! Had he not been  
My father, do you think that I should weep ?

LUCRETIA

Alas ! poor boy, what else couldst thou have done !

*Enter BEATRICE*

BEATRICE (*in a hurried voice*)

Did he pass this way ? Have you seen him,  
brother ?  
Ah, no ! that is his step upon the stairs ;  
'Tis nearer now ; his hand is on the door ;  
Mother, if I to thee have ever been

A duteous child, now save me ! Thou, great God,  
Whose image upon earth a father is,  
Dost thou indeed abandon me ? He comes ;  
The door is opening now ; I see his face ;  
He frowns on others, but he smiles on me,  
Even as he did after the feast last night.

*Enter a Servant*

Almighty God, how merciful thou art !  
'Tis but Orsino's servant. — Well, what news ?

SERVANT

My master bids me say the Holy Father  
Has sent back your petition thus unopened.  
*(Giving a paper)*

And he demands at what hour 'twere secure  
To visit you again ?

LUCRETIA

At the Ave Mary.

*[Exit Servant.]*

So, daughter, our last hope has failed. Ah me,  
How pale you look ! you tremble, and you stand  
Wrapped in some fixed and fearful meditation,  
As if one thought were overstrong for you ;  
Your eyes have a chill glare ; oh, dearest child !  
Are you gone mad ? If not, pray speak to me.

BEATRICE

You see I am not mad ; I speak to you.

LUCRETIA

You talked of something that your father did  
After that dreadful feast ? Could it be worse

Than when he smiled, and cried, "My sons are dead!"

And every one looked in his neighbor's face  
To see if others were as white as he?  
At the first word he spoke I felt the blood  
Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance;  
And when it passed I sat all weak and wild;  
Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong  
words

Checked his unnatural pride; and I could see  
The devil was rebuked that lives in him.  
Until this hour thus you have ever stood  
Between us and your father's moody wrath  
Like a protecting presence; your firm mind  
Has been our only refuge and defence.  
What can have thus subdued it? What can now  
Have given you that cold melancholy look,  
Succeeding to your unaccustomed fear?

BEATRICE

What is it that you say? I was just thinking  
'Twere better not to struggle any more.  
Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody;  
Yet never — oh! before worse comes of it,  
'Twere wise to die; it ends in that at last.

LUCRETIA

Oh, talk not so, dear child! Tell me at once  
What did your father do or say to you?  
He stayed not after that accursèd feast  
One moment in your chamber. — Speak to me.

BERNARDO

Oh, sister, sister, prithee, speak to us!

BEATRICE (*speaking very slowly, with a forced calmness*)

It was one word, mother, one little word ;  
One look, one smile.

(*Wildly*)

Oh ! he has trampled me  
Under his feet, and made the blood stream down  
My pallid cheeks. And he has given us all  
Ditch-water, and the fever-stricken flesh  
Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve,  
And we have eaten. He has made me look  
On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust  
Of heavy chains has gangrened his sweet limbs ;  
And I have never yet despaired — but now !  
What would I say ?

(*Recovering herself*)

Ah, no ! 'tis nothing new.  
The sufferings we all share have made me wild ;  
He only struck and cursed me as he passed ;  
He said, he looked, he did, — nothing at all  
Beyond his wont, yet it disordered me.  
Alas ! I am forgetful of my duty ;  
I should preserve my senses for your sake.

LUCRETIA

Nay, Beatrice ; have courage, my sweet girl.  
If any one despairs it should be I,  
Who loved him once, and now must live with him  
Till God in pity call for him or me.  
For you may, like your sister, find some husband,  
And smile, years hence, with children round your  
knees ;  
Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil,  
Shall be remembered only as a dream.



## BEATRICE

Talk not to me, dear Lady, of a husband.  
Did you not nurse me when my mother died ?  
Did you not shield me and that dearest boy ?  
And had we any other friend but you  
In infancy, with gentle words and looks,  
To win our father not to murder us ?  
And shall I now desert you ? May the ghost  
Of my dead mother plead against my soul,  
If I abandon her who filled the place  
She left, with more, even, than a mother's love !

## BERNARDO

And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed  
I would not leave you in this wretchedness,  
Even though the Pope should make me free to live  
In some blithe place, like others of my age,  
With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air.  
Oh, never think that I will leave you, mother !

## LUCRETIA

My dear, dear children !

*Enter CENCI, suddenly*

## CENCI

What ! Beatrice here !

Come hither !

*[She shrinks back, and covers her face.]*

Nay, hide not your face, 'tis fair ;  
Look up ! Why, yesternight you dared to look  
With disobedient insolence upon me,

Bending a stern and an inquiring brow  
On what I meant ; whilst I then sought to hide  
That which I came to tell you — but in vain.

BEATRICE (*wildly staggering towards the door*)

Oh, that the earth would gape ! Hide me, O God !

CENCI

Then it was I whose inarticulate words  
Fell from my lips, and who with tottering steps  
Fled from your presence, as you now from mine.  
Stay, I command you ! From this day and hour  
Never again, I think, with fearless eye,  
And brow superior, and unaltered cheek,  
And that lip made for tenderness or scorn,  
Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind ;  
Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber !  
Thou too, loathed image of thy cursèd mother,

(*To BERNARDO*)

Thy milky, meek face makes me sick with hate !

[*Exeunt BEATRICE and BERNARDO.*]

(*Aside*) So much has passed between us as must  
make

Me bold, her fearful. — 'Tis an awful thing  
To touch such mischief as I now conceive ;  
So men sit shivering on the dewy bank  
And try the chill stream with their feet ; once in —  
How the delighted spirit pants for joy !

LUCRETIA (*advancing timidly towards him*)

O husband ! pray forgive poor Beatrice.  
She meant not any ill.

## CENCI

Nor you perhaps?  
Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by  
    rote  
Parricide with his alphabet? nor Giacomo?  
Nor those two most unnatural sons who stirred  
Enmity up against me with the Pope?  
Whom in one night merciful God cut off.  
Innocent lambs! They thought not any ill.  
You were not here conspiring? you said nothing  
Of how I might be dungeoned as a madman;  
Or be condemned to death for some offence,  
And you would be the witnesses? This failing,  
How just it were to hire assassins, or  
Put sudden poison in my evening drink?  
Or smother me when overcome by wine?  
Seeing we had no other judge but God,  
And he had sentenced me, and there were none  
But you to be the executioners  
Of his decree enregistered in heaven?  
Oh, no! You said not this?

## LUCRETIA

So help me God,  
I never thought the things you charge me with!

## CENCI

If you dare to speak that wicked lie again,  
I'll kill you. What! it was not by your counsel  
That Beatrice disturbed the feast last night?  
You did not hope to stir some enemies  
Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn

What every nerve of you now trembles at ?  
 You judged that men were bolder than they are ;  
 Few dare to stand between their grave and me.

## LUCRETIA

Look not so dreadfully ! By my salvation  
 I knew not aught that Beatrice designed ;  
 Nor do I think she designed anything  
 Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.

## CENCI

Blaspheming liar ! you are damned for this !  
 But I will take you where you may persuade  
 The stones you tread on to deliver you ;  
 For men shall there be none but those who dare  
 All things — not question that which I command.  
 On Wednesday next I shall set out ; you know  
 That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella ;  
 'Tis safely walled, and moated round about ;  
 Its dungeons under ground and its thick towers  
 Never told tales ; though they have heard and seen  
 What might make dumb things speak. Why do  
 you linger ?

Make speediest preparation for the journey !

[Exit LUCRETIA.]

The all-beholding sun yet shines ; I hear  
 A busy stir of men about the streets ;  
 I see the bright sky through the window panes.  
 It is a garish, broad, and peering day ;  
 Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears ;  
 And every little corner, nook, and hole,  
 Is penetrated with the insolent light.  
 Come, darkness ! Yet, what is the day to me ?

And wherefore should I wish for night, who do  
A deed which shall confound both night and day ?  
'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist  
Of horror ; if there be a sun in heaven,  
She shall not dare to look upon its beams ;  
Nor feel its warmth. Let her, then, wish for night ;  
The act I think shall soon extinguish all  
For me ; I bear a darker, deadlier gloom  
Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air,  
Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud,  
In which I walk secure and unbeheld  
Towards my purpose. — Would that it were done !

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II. — *A Chamber in the Vatican. Enter CAMILLO and  
GIACOMO, in conversation.*

CAMILLO

There is an obsolete and doubtful law  
By which you might obtain a bare provision  
Of food and clothing.

GIACOMO

Nothing more ? Alas !  
Bare must be the provision which strict law  
Awards, and aged sullen avarice pays.  
Why did my father not apprentice me  
To some mechanic trade ? I should have then  
Been trained in no highborn necessities  
Which I could meet not by my daily toil.  
The eldest son of a rich nobleman  
Is heir to all his incapacities ;  
He has wide wants, and narrow powers. If you,

Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once  
From thrice-driven beds of down, and delicate  
food,  
An hundred servants, and six palaces,  
To that which nature doth indeed require? —

## CAMILLO

Nay, there is reason in your plea; 'twere hard.

## GIACOMO

'Tis hard for a firm man to bear; but I  
Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth,  
Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father,  
Without a bond or witness to the deed;  
And children, who inherit her fine senses,  
The fairest creatures in this breathing world;  
And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal,  
Do you not think the Pope will interpose  
And stretch authority beyond the law?

## CAMILLO

Though your peculiar case is hard, I know  
The Pope will not divert the course of law.  
After that impious feast the other night  
I spoke with him, and urged him then to check  
Your father's cruel hand; he frowned and said,  
"Children are disobedient, and they sting  
Their fathers' hearts to madness and despair,  
Requiting years of care with contumely.  
I pity the Count Cenci from my heart;  
His outraged love perhaps awakened hate,  
And thus he is exasperated to ill.  
In the great war between the old and young,

I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,  
Will keep at least blameless neutrality."

*Enter ORSINO*

You, my good lord Orsino, heard those words.

ORSINO

What words ?

GIACOMO

Alas, repeat them not again !

There then is no redress for me ; at least  
None but that which I may achieve myself,  
Since I am driven to the brink. — But, say,  
My innocent sister and my only brother  
Are dying underneath my father's eye.  
The memorable torturers of this land,  
Galeaz Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin,  
Never inflicted on their meanest slave  
What these endure ; shall they have no protection ?

CAMILLO

Why, if they would petition to the Pope,  
I see not how he could refuse it ; yet  
He holds it of most dangerous example  
In aught to weaken the paternal power,  
Being, as 'twere, the shadow of his own.  
I pray you now excuse me. I have business  
That will not bear delay.

[*Exit CAMILLO.*]

GIACOMO

But you, Orsino,  
Have the petition ; wherefore not present it ?

## ORSINO

I have presented it, and backed it with  
My earnest prayers and urgent interest ;  
It was returned unanswered. I doubt not  
But that the strange and execrable deeds  
Alleged in it — in truth they might well baffle  
Any belief — have turned the Pope's displea-  
sure  
Upon the accusers from the criminal.  
So I should guess from what Camillo said.

## GIACOMO

My friend, that palace-walking devil, Gold,  
Has whispered silence to His Holiness ;  
And we are left, as scorpions ringed with fire.  
What should we do but strike ourselves to  
death ?  
For he who is our murderous persecutor  
Is shielded by a father's holy name,  
Or I would —

[Stops abruptly.]

## ORSINO

What ? Fear not to speak your thought.  
Words are but holy as the deeds they cover ;  
A priest who has forsworn the God he serves,  
A judge who makes Truth weep at his decree,  
A friend who should weave counsel, as I now,  
But as the mantle of some selfish guile,  
A father who is all a tyrant seems, —  
Were the profaner for his sacred name.

77 makes truth, Shelley, 1821 || makes the truth, Shelley, 1819.



GIACOMO

Ask me not what I think ; the unwilling brain  
Feigns often what it would not ; and we trust  
Imagination with such fantasies  
As the tongue dares not fashion into words —  
Which have no words, their horror makes them  
dim  
To the mind's eye. My heart denies itself  
To think what you demand.

ORSINO

But a friend's bosom  
Is as the innermost cave of our own mind,  
Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day  
And from the all-communicating air.  
You look what I suspected —

GIACOMO

Spare me now !  
I am as one lost in a midnight wood,  
Who dares not ask some harmless passenger  
The path across the wilderness, lest he,  
As my thoughts are, should be — a murderer.  
I know you are my friend, and all I dare  
Speak to my soul that will I trust with thee.  
But now my heart is heavy, and would take  
Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care.  
Pardon me that I say farewell — farewell !  
I would that to my own suspected self  
I could address a word so full of peace.

97 *you are || thou art*, Rossetti.

## ORSINO

Farewell ! — Be your thoughts better or more bold.

[*Exit* GIACOMO.]

I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo  
To feed his hope with cold encouragement.  
It fortunately serves my close designs  
That 'tis a trick of this same family  
To analyze their own and other minds.  
Such self-anatomy shall teach the will  
Dangerous secrets ; for it tempts our powers,  
Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,  
Into the depth of darkest purposes.  
So Cenci fell into the pit ; even I,  
Since Beatrice unveiled me to myself,  
And made me shrink from what I cannot shun,  
Show a poor figure to my own esteem,  
To which I grow half reconciled. I'll do  
As little mischief as I can ; that thought  
Shall fee the accuser conscience.

(*After a pause*)

Now what harm

If Cenci should be murdered ? — Yet, if murdered,  
Wherefore by me ? And what if I could take  
The profit, yet omit the sin and peril  
In such an action ? Of all earthly things  
I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words ;  
And such is Cenci ; and, while Cenci lives,  
His daughter's dowry were a secret grave  
If a priest wins her. — O fair Beatrice !  
Would that I loved thee not, or, loving thee,  
Could but despise danger and gold and all  
That frowns between my wish and its effect,

Or smiles beyond it ! There is no escape ;  
Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar,  
And follows me to the resort of men,  
And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams,  
So when I wake my blood seems liquid fire ;  
And if I strike my damp and dizzy head,  
My hot palm scorches it ; her very name,  
But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart  
Sicken and pant ; and thus unprofitably  
I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights  
Till weak imagination half possesses  
The self-created shadow. Yet much longer  
Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours.  
From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo  
I must work out my own dear purposes.  
I see, as from a tower, the end of all :  
Her father dead ; her brother bound to me  
By a dark secret, surer than the grave ;  
Her mother scared and unexpostulating  
From the dread manner of her wish achieved ;  
And she ! — Once more take courage, my faint  
heart ;  
What dares a friendless maiden matched with thee ?  
I have such foresight as assures success.  
Some unbeheld divinity doth ever,  
When dread events are near, stir up men's minds  
To black suggestions ; and he prospers best,  
Not who becomes the instrument of ill,  
But who can flatter the dark spirit that makes  
Its empire and its prey of other hearts  
Till it become his slave — as I will do.

[Exit.]

## ACT III

SCENE I. — *An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.* LUCRETIA ; to  
her enter BEATRICE.

BEATRICE (*she enters staggering and speaks wildly*)

REACH me that handkerchief ! — My brain is hurt ;  
My eyes are full of blood ; just wipe them for me —  
I see but indistinctly.

LUCRETIA

My sweet child,  
You have no wound ; 'tis only a cold dew  
That starts from your dear brow. — Alas, alas !  
What has befallen ?

BEATRICE

How comes this hair undone ?  
Its wandering strings must be what blind me so,  
And yet I tied it fast. — Oh, horrible !  
The pavement sinks under my feet ! The walls  
Spin round ! I see a woman weeping there,  
And standing calm and motionless, whilst I  
Slide giddily as the world reels. — My God !  
The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood !  
The sunshine on the floor is black ! The air  
Is changed to vapors such as the dead breathe  
In charnel-pits ! Pah ! I am choked ! There creeps  
A clinging, black, contaminating mist  
About me — 'tis substantial, heavy, thick ;  
I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues

My fingers and my limbs to one another,  
 And eats into my sinews, and dissolves  
 My flesh to a pollution, poisoning  
 The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life!  
 My God! I never knew what the mad felt  
 Before; for I am mad beyond all doubt!

(*More wildly*)

No, I am dead! These putrefying limbs  
 Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul  
 Which would burst forth into the wandering air!

(*A pause*;

What hideous thought was that I had even now?  
 'Tis gone; and yet its burden remains here  
 O'er these dull eyes — upon this weary heart!  
 O world! O life! O day! O misery!

LUCRETIA

What ails thee, my poor child? She answers  
 not.

Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain,  
 But not its cause; suffering has dried away  
 The source from which it sprung.

BEATRICE (*frantically*)

Like Parricide —

Misery has killed its father; yet its father  
 Never like mine — O God! what thing am I?

LUCRETIA

My dearest child, what has your father done?

BEATRICE (*doubtfully*)

Who art thou, questioner? I have no father.

[*Aside.*

She is the madhouse nurse who tends on me,  
It is a piteous office.

(*To LUCRETIA, in a slow, subdued voice*)

Do you know,  
I thought I was that wretched Beatrice  
Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales  
From hall to hall by the entangled hair ;  
At others, pens up naked in damp cells  
Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there  
Till she will eat strange flesh. This woful story  
So did I overact in my sick dreams  
That I imagined — no, it cannot be !  
Horrible things have been in this wild world,  
Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange  
Of good and ill ; and worse have been conceived  
Than ever there was found a heart to do.  
But never fancy imaged such a deed  
As —

(*Pauses, suddenly recollecting herself*)

Who art thou ? Swear to me, ere I die  
With fearful expectation, that indeed  
Thou art not what thou seemest — Mother !

LUCRETIA

Oh !

My sweet child, know you —

BEATRICE

Yet speak it not ;  
For then if this be truth, that other too  
Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth,

59 *sweetest or know you not, Rossetti conj.*

Linked with each lasting circumstance of life,  
Never to change, never to pass away.  
Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace ;  
Thou art Lucretia ; I am Beatrice.  
I have talked some wild words, but will no more.  
Mother, come near me ; from this point of time,  
I am —

*(Her voice dies away faintly)*

LUCRETIA

Alas ! what has befallen thee, child ?  
What has thy father done ?

BEATRICE

What have I done ?  
Am I not innocent ? Is it my crime  
That one with white hair and imperious brow,  
Who tortured me from my forgotten years  
As parents only dare, should call himself  
My father, yet should be ! — Oh, what am I ?  
What name, what place, what memory shall be  
mine ?  
What retrospects, outliving even despair ?

LUCRETIA.

He is a violent tyrant, surely, child ;  
We know that death alone can make us free ;  
His death or ours. But what can he have done  
Of deadlier outrage or worse injury ?  
Thou art unlike thyself ; thine eyes shoot forth  
A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me,  
Unlock those pallid hands whose fingers twine  
With one another.

## BEATRICE

'Tis the restless life  
Tortured within them. If I try to speak,  
I shall go mad. Ay, something must be done ;  
What, yet I know not — something which shall  
make

The thing that I have suffered but a shadow  
In the dread lightning which avenges it ;  
Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying  
The consequence of what it cannot cure.  
Some such thing is to be endured or done ;  
When I know what, I shall be still and calm,  
And never anything will move me more.  
But now ! — O blood, which art my father's blood,  
Circling through these contaminated veins,  
If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth,  
Could wash away the crime and punishment  
By which I suffer — no, that cannot be !  
Many might doubt there were a God above  
Who sees and permits evil, and so die ;  
That faith no agony shall obscure in me.

## LUCRETIA

It must indeed have been some bitter wrong ;  
Yet what, I dare not guess. Oh, my lost child,  
Hide not in proud impenetrable grief  
Thy sufferings from my fear.

## BEATRICE

I hide them not.  
What are the words which you would have me  
speak ?



I, who can feign no image in my mind  
Of that which has transformed me ; I, whose  
thought

Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up  
In its own formless horror — of all words,  
That minister to mortal intercourse,  
Which wouldst thou hear ? for there is none to tell  
My misery ; if another ever knew  
Aught like to it, she died as I will die,  
And left it, as I must, without a name.  
Death, death ! our law and our religion call thee  
A punishment and a reward ; oh, which  
Have I deserved ?

## LUCRETIA

The peace of innocence,  
Till in your season you be called to heaven.  
Whate'er you may have suffered, you have done  
No evil. Death must be the punishment  
Of crime, or the reward of trampling down  
The thorns which God has strewed upon the path  
Which leads to immortality.

## BEATRICE

Ay, death —  
The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God,  
Let me not be bewildered while I judge.  
If I must live day after day, and keep  
These limbs, the unworthy temple of thy spirit,  
As a foul den from which what thou abhorrest  
May mock thee unavenged — it shall not be !  
Self-murder — no, that might be no escape,  
For thy decree yawns like a Hell between  
Our will and it. — Oh ! in this mortal world

There is no vindication and no law,  
Which can adjudge and execute the doom  
Of that through which I suffer.

*Enter ORSINO*

*(She approaches him solemnly)*

Welcome, friend !

I have to tell you that, since last we met,  
I have endured a wrong so great and strange  
That neither life nor death can give me rest.  
Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds  
Which have no form, sufferings which have no  
tongue.

ORSINO

And what is he who has thus injured you ?

BEATRICE

The man they call my father ; a dread name.

ORSINO

It cannot be —

BEATRICE

What it can be, or not,  
Forbear to think. It is, and it has been ;  
Advise me how it shall not be again.  
I thought to die ; but a religious awe  
Restrains me, and the dread lest death itself  
Might be no refuge from the consciousness  
Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak !

ORSINO

Accuse him of the deed, and let the law  
Avenge thee.

BEATRICE

Oh, ice-hearted counsellor !

If I could find a word that might make known  
The crime of my destroyer ; and that done,  
My tongue should like a knife tear out the secret  
Which cankers my heart's core ; ay, lay all bare,  
So that my unpolluted fame should be  
With vilest gossips a stale mouthèd story ;  
A mock, a byword, an astonishment : —  
If this were done, which never shall be done,  
Think of the offender's gold, his dreaded hate,  
And the strange horror of the accuser's tale,  
Baffling belief, and overpowering speech ;  
Scarce whispered, unimaginable, wrapped  
In hideous hints — Oh, most assured redress !

ORSINO

You will endure it then ?

BEATRICE

Endure ! — Orsino,  
It seems your counsel is small profit.

*(Turns from him, and speaks half to herself)*

Ay,

All must be suddenly resolved and done.  
What is this undistinguishable mist  
Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,  
Darkening each other ?

ORSINO

Should the offender live ?  
Triumph in his misdeed ? and make, by use,

His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt,  
Thine element ; until thou mayest become  
Utterly lost ; subdued even to the hue  
Of that which thou permittest ?

BEATRICE (*to herself*)

Mighty death !

Thou double-visaged shadow ! only judge !  
Rightfullest arbiter !

*(She retires, absorbed in thought)*

LUCRETIA

If the lightning  
Of God has e'er descended to avenge —

ORSINO

Blaspheme not ! His high Providence commits  
Its glory on this earth and their own wrongs  
Into the hands of men ; if they neglect  
To punish crime —

LUCRETIA

But if one, like this wretch,  
Should mock with gold opinion, law and power ?  
If there be no appeal to that which makes  
The guiltiest tremble ? if, because our wrongs,  
For that they are unnatural, strange and monstrous,  
Exceed all measure of belief ? Oh, God !  
If, for the very reasons which should make  
Redress most swift and sure, our injurer triumphs ?  
And we, the victims, bear worse punishment  
Than that appointed for their torturer ?

ORSINO ]

Think not

But that there is redress where there is wrong,  
So we be bold enough to seize it.

LUCRETIA

How?

If there were any way to make all sure,  
I know not — but I think it might be good  
To —

ORSINO

Why, his late outrage to Beatrice —  
For it is such, as I but faintly guess,  
As makes remorse dishonor, and leaves her  
Only one duty, how she may avenge;  
You, but one refuge from ills ill endured;  
Me, but one counsel —

LUCRETIA

For we cannot hope  
That aid, or retribution, or resource  
Will arise thence, where every other one  
Might find them with less need.

[BEATRICE advances.]

ORSINO

Then —

BEATRICE

Peace, Orsino!

And, honored Lady, while I speak, I pray  
That you put off, as garments overworn,  
Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,  
And all the fit restraints of daily life,

Which have been borne from childhood, but which  
now

Would be a mockery to my holier plea.  
As I have said, I have endured a wrong,  
Which, though it be expressionless, is such  
As asks atonement, both for what is passed,  
And lest I be reserved, day after day,  
To load with crimes an overburdened soul,  
And be — what ye can dream not. I have prayed  
To God, and I have talked with my own heart,  
And have unravelled my entangled will,  
And have at length determined what is right.  
Art thou thy friend, Orsino? False or true?  
Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.

ORSINO

I swear

To dedicate my cunning, and my strength,  
My silence, and whatever else is mine,  
To thy commands.

LUCRETIA

You think we should devise

His death?

BEATRICE

And execute what is devised,  
And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.

ORSINO

And yet most cautious.

LUCRETIA

For the jealous laws  
Would punish us with death and infamy  
For that which it became themselves to do.

BEATRICE

Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino,  
What are the means?

ORSINO

I know two dull, fierce outlaws,  
Who think man's spirit as a worm's, and they  
Would trample out, for any slight caprice,  
The meanest or the noblest life. This mood  
Is marketable here in Rome. They sell  
What we now want.

LUCRETIA

To-morrow, before dawn,  
Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,  
Petrella, in the Apulian Apennines.  
If he arrive there —

BEATRICE

He must not arrive.

ORSINO

Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

LUCRETIA

The sun will scarce be set.

BEATRICE

But I remember  
Two miles on this side of the fort the road  
Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow,  
And winds with short turns down the precipice;  
And in its depth there is a mighty rock,

Which has, from unimaginable years,  
Sustained itself with terror and with toil  
Over a gulf, and with the agony  
With which it clings seems slowly coming down ;  
Even as a wretched soul hour after hour  
Clings to the mass of life ; yet, clinging, leans ;  
And, leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss  
In which it fears to fall ; beneath this crag  
Huge as despair, as if in weariness,  
The melancholy mountain yawns ; below,  
You hear but see not an impetuous torrent  
Raging among the caverns, and a bridge •  
Crosses the chasm ; and high above there grow,  
With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,  
Cedars, and yews, and pines ; whose tangled hair  
Is matted in one solid roof of shade  
By the dark ivy's twine. At noonday here  
'Tis twilight, and at sunset blackest night.

ORSINO

Before you reach that bridge make some excuse  
For spurring on your mules, or loitering  
Until —

BEATRICE

What sound is that ?

LUCRETIA

Hark ! No, it cannot be a servant's step ;  
It must be Cenci, unexpectedly  
Returned — make some excuse for being here.

BEATRICE (*to ORSINO as she goes out*)

That step we hear approach must never pass  
The bridge of which we spoke.

[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA and BEATRICE.]



ORSINO

What shall I do?

Cenci must find me here, and I must bear  
 The imperious inquisition of his looks  
 As to what brought me hither; let me mask  
 Mine own in some inane and vacant smile.

*Enter GIACOMO, in a hurried manner*

How! have you ventured hither? know you  
 then  
 That Cenci is from home?

GIACOMO

I sought him here;  
 And now must wait till he returns.

ORSINO

Great God!  
 Weigh you the danger of this rashness?

GIACOMO

Ay!

Does my destroyer know his danger? We  
 Are now no more, as once, parent and child,  
 But man to man; the oppressor to the oppressed,  
 The slanderer to the slandered; foe to foe.  
 He has cast Nature off, which was his shield,  
 And Nature casts him off, who is her shame;  
 And I spurn both. Is it a father's throat  
 Which I will shake, and say, I ask not gold;  
 I ask not happy years; nor memories

Of tranquil childhood ; nor home-sheltered love ;  
Though all these hast thou torn from me, and  
    more ;  
But only my fair fame ; only one hoard  
Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy  
    hate  
Under the penury heaped on me by thee ;  
Or I will — God can understand and pardon ,  
Why should I speak with man ?

ORSINO

Be calm, dear friend.

GIACOMO

Well, I will calmly tell you what he did.  
This old Francesco Cenci, as you know,  
Borrowed the dowry of my wife from me,  
And then denied the loan ; and left me so  
In poverty, the which I sought to mend  
By holding a poor office in the state.  
It had been promised to me, and already  
I bought new clothing for my ragged babes,  
And my wife smiled ; and my heart knew re-  
    pose ;  
When Cenci's intercession, as I found,  
Conferred this office on a wretch, whom thus  
He paid for vilest service. I returned  
With this ill news, and we sate sad together  
Solacing our despondency with tears  
Of such affection and unbroken faith  
As temper life's worst bitterness ; when he,  
As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse,  
Mocking our poverty, and telling us

Such was God's scourge for disobedient sons.  
And then, that I might strike him dumb with  
shame,

I spoke of my wife's dowry ; but he coined  
A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted  
The sum in secret riot ; and he saw  
My wife was touched, and he went smiling forth.  
And when I knew the impression he had made,  
And felt my wife insult with silent scorn  
My ardent truth, and look averse and cold,  
I went forth too ; but soon returned again ;  
Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught  
My children her harsh thoughts, and they all  
cried,

“ Give us clothes, father ! Give us better food !  
What you in one night squander were enough  
For months ! ” I looked, and saw that home was  
hell.

And to that hell will I return no more,  
Until mine enemy has rendered up  
Atonement, or, as he gave life to me,  
I will, reversing Nature's law —

ORSINO

Trust me,  
The compensation which thou seekest here  
Will be denied.

GIACOMO

Then — Are you not my friend ?  
Did you not hint at the alternative,  
Upon the brink of which you see I stand,  
The other day when we conversed together ?

My wrongs were then less. That word, parri-  
cide,  
Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.

ORSINO

It must be fear itself, for the bare word  
Is hollow mockery. Mark how wisest God  
Draws to one point the threads of a just doom,  
So sanctifying it; what you devise  
Is, as it were, accomplished.

GIACOMO

Is he dead?

ORSINO

His grave is ready. Know that since we met  
Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.

GIACOMO

What outrage?

ORSINO

That she speaks not, but you may  
Conceive such half conjectures as I do  
From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief  
Of her stern brow, bent on the idle air,  
And her severe unmodulated voice,  
Drowning both tenderness and dread; and last  
From this; that whilst her step-mother and I,  
Bewildered in our horror, talked together  
With obscure hints, both self-misunderstood,  
And darkly guessing, stumbling, in our talk,  
Over the truth and yet to its revenge,

She interrupted us, and with a look  
Which told, before she spoke it, he must die —

GIACOMO

It is enough. My doubts are well appeased ;  
There is a higher reason for the act  
Than mine ; there is a holier judge than me,  
A more unblamed avenger. Beatrice,  
Who in the gentleness of thy sweet youth  
Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised  
A living flower, but thou hast pitied it  
With needless tears ! fair sister, thou in whom  
Men wondered how such loveliness and wisdom

Did not destroy each other ! is there made  
Ravage of thee ? O heart, I ask no more  
Justification ! Shall I wait, Orsino,  
Till he return, and stab him at the door ?

ORSINO

Not so ; some accident might interpose  
To rescue him from what is now most sure ;  
And you are unprovided where to fly,  
How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen ;  
All is contrived ; success is so assured  
That —

*Enter BEATRICE*

BEATRICE

'Tis my brother's voice ! You know me not ?

GIACOMO

My sister, my lost sister !

BEATRICE

Lost indeed !

I see Orsino has talked with you, and  
That you conjecture things too horrible  
To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now stay  
not,

He might return ; yet kiss me ; I shall know  
That then thou hast consented to his death.  
Farewell, farewell ! Let piety to God,  
Brotherly love, justice and clemency,  
And all things that make tender hardest hearts,  
Make thine hard, brother. Answer not — farewell.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II. — *A mean Apartment in GIACOMO's House.* GIACOMO  
*alone.*

GIACOMO

'Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet.

(*Thunder, and the sound of a storm*)

What ! can the everlasting elements  
Feel with a worm like man ? If so, the shaft  
Of mercy-wingèd lightning would not fall  
On stones and trees. My wife and children  
sleep ;

They are now living in unmeaning dreams ;  
But I must wake, still doubting if that deed  
Be just which was most necessary. Oh,  
Thou un replenished lamp, whose narrow fire  
Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge  
Devouring darkness hovers ! thou small flame,  
Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,

Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,  
Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail and be  
As thou hadst never been ! So wastes and sinks  
Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine ;  
But that no power can fill with vital oil, —  
That broken lamp of flesh. Ha ! 'tis the blood  
Which fed these veins that ebbs till all is  
cold ;

It is the form that moulded mine that sinks  
Into the white and yellow spasms of death ;  
It is the soul by which mine was arrayed  
In God's immortal likeness which now stands  
Naked before Heaven's judgment-seat !

*(A bell strikes)*

One ! Two !

The hours crawl on ; and, when my hairs are  
white,

My son will then perhaps be waiting thus,  
Tortured between just hate and vain remorse ;  
Chiding the tardy messenger of news  
Like those which I expect. I almost wish  
He be not dead, although my wrongs are great ;  
Yet — 'tis Orsino's step.

*Enter ORSINO*

Speak !

ORSINO

I am come

To say he has escaped.

GIACOMO

Escaped !

ORSINO

And safe

Within Petrella. He passed by the spot  
Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.

GIACOMO

Are we the fools of such contingencies?  
And do we waste in blind misgivings thus  
The hours when we should act? Then wind and  
thunder,  
Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud  
laughter  
With which Heaven mocks our weakness! I  
henceforth  
Will ne'er repent of aught designed or done,  
But my repentance.

ORSINO

See, the lamp is out.

GIACOMO

If no remorse is ours when the dim air  
Has drunk this innocent flame, why should we quail  
When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits  
See the worst deeds they prompt, shall sink for-  
ever?  
No, I am hardened.

ORSINO

Why, what need of this?

Who feared the pale intrusion of remorse  
In a just deed? Although our first plan failed,  
Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest.  
But light the lamp; let us not talk i' the dark.



GIACOMO (*lighting the lamp*)

And yet, once quenched, I cannot thus relume  
My father's life ; do you not think his ghost  
Might plead that argument with God ?

ORSINO

Once gone,  
You cannot now recall your sister's peace ;  
Your own extinguished years of youth and hope ;  
Nor your wife's bitter words ; nor all the taunts  
Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune  
takes ;  
Nor your dead mother ; nor —

GIACOMO

Oh, speak no more !  
I am resolved, although this very hand  
Must quench the life that animated it.

ORSINO

There is no need of that. Listen ; you know  
Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella  
In old Colonna's time ; him whom your father  
Degraded from his post ? And Marzio,  
That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year  
Of a reward of blood, well earned and due ?

GIACOMO

I knew Olimpio ; and they say he hated  
Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage  
His lips grew white only to see him pass.  
Of Marzio I know nothing.

ORSINO

Marzio's hate  
Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men,  
But in your name, and as at your request,  
To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia.

GIACOMO

Only to talk ?

ORSINO

The moments which even now  
Pass onward to to-morrow's midnight hour  
May memorize their flight with death ; ere then  
They must have talked, and may perhaps have  
done,  
And made an end.

GIACOMO

Listen ! What sound is that ?

ORSINO

The house-dog moans, and the beams crack ; nought  
else.

GIACOMO

It is my wife complaining in her sleep ;  
I doubt not she is saying bitter things  
Of me ; and all my children round her dreaming  
That I deny them sustenance.

ORSINO

Whilst he  
Who truly took it from them, and who fills  
Their hungry rest with bitterness, now sleeps  
Lapped in bad pleasures, and triumphantly

Mocks thee in visions of successful hate  
Too like the truth of day.

**GIACOMO**

If e'er he wakes

Again, I will not trust to hireling hands —

**ORSINO**

Why, that were well. I must be gone; good night!

When next we meet, may all be done!

**GIACOMO**

And all  
Forgotten! Oh, that I had never been!

[*Exeunt.*

91 *may all be done!* Shelley Errata, Shelley, 1821 || GIACOMO:  
*May all be done, and,* Shelley, 1819.

## ACT IV

SCENE I. — *An Apartment in the Castle of Petrella. Enter CENCI.*

CENCI

SHE comes not; yet I left her even now  
Vanquished and faint. She knows the penalty  
Of her delay; yet what if threats are vain?  
Am I not now within Petrella's moat?  
Or fear I still the eyes and ears of Rome?  
Might I not drag her by the golden hair?  
Stamp on her? keep her sleepless till her brain  
Be overworn? tame her with chains and famine?  
Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone  
What I most seek! No, 'tis her stubborn will,  
Which, by its own consent, shall stoop as low  
As that which drags it down.

*Enter LUCRETIA*

Thou loathèd wretch!  
Hide thee from my abhorrence; fly, begone!  
Yet stay! Bid Beatrice come hither.

LUCRETIA

Oh,  
Husband! I pray, for thine own wretched sake,  
Heed what thou dost. A man who walks like thee  
Through crimes, and through the danger of his  
crimes,

*4 not now, Shelley, 1821 || now not, Shelley, 1819.*

Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave.  
And thou art old ; thy hairs are hoary gray ;  
As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell,  
Pity thy daughter ; give her to some friend  
In marriage ; so that she may tempt thee not  
To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.

## CENCI

What ! like her sister, who has found a home  
To mock my hate from with prosperity ?  
Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee,  
And all that yet remain. My death may be  
Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go,  
Bid her come hither, and before my mood  
Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair.

## LUCRETIA

She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence  
She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance ;  
And in that trance she heard a voice which said,  
“ Cenci must die ! Let him confess himself !  
Even now the accusing Angel waits to hear  
If God, to punish his enormous crimes,  
Harden his dying heart ! ”

## CENCI

Why — such things are.  
No doubt divine revealings may be made.  
’Tis plain I have been favored from above,  
For when I cursed my sons, they died. — Ay — so.  
As to the right or wrong, that’s talk. Repentance ?  
Repentance is an easy moment’s work,  
And more depends on God than me. Well —  
well —

I must give up the greater point, which was  
To poison and corrupt her soul.

*(A pause ; LUCRETIA approaches anxiously, and  
then shrinks back as he speaks)*

One, two ;

Ay — Rocco and Cristofano my curse  
Strangled ; and Giacomo, I think, will find  
Life a worse Hell than that beyond the grave ;  
Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate,  
Die in despair, blaspheming ; to Bernardo,  
He is so innocent, I will bequeathe  
The memory of these deeds, and make his youth  
The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts  
Shall grow like weeds on a neglected tomb.  
When all is done, out in the wide Campagna  
I will pile up my silver and my gold ;  
My costly robes, paintings, and tapestries ;  
My parchments, and all records of my wealth ;  
And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave  
Of my possessions nothing but my name ;  
Which shall be an inheritance to strip  
Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,  
My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign  
Into the hands of Him who wielded it ;  
Be it for its own punishment or theirs,  
He will not ask it of me till the lash  
Be broken in its last and deepest wound ;  
Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet,  
Lest death outspeed my purpose ; let me make  
Short work and sure.

*[Going.]*

LUCRETIA *(stops him)*

Oh, stay ! it was a feint ;  
She had no vision, and she heard no voice.  
I said it but to awe thee.

CENCI

That is well.

Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God,  
Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie!  
For Beatrice worse terrors are in store  
To bend her to my will.

LUCRETIA

Oh, to what will?

What cruel sufferings more than she has known  
Canst thou inflict?

CENCI

Andrea! go, call my daughter  
And if she comes not, tell her that I come.

(To LUCRETIA)

What sufferings? I will drag her, step by step,  
Through infamies unheard of among men;  
She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon  
Of public scorn, for acts blazoned abroad,  
One among which shall be — what? canst thou  
guess?

She shall become (for what she most abhors  
Shall have a fascination to entrap  
Her loathing will) to her own conscious self  
All she appears to others; and when dead,  
As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven,  
A rebel to her father and her God,  
Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds;  
Her name shall be the terror of the earth;  
Her spirit shall approach the throne of God  
Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make  
Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin.

*Enter ANDREA*

ANDREA

The Lady Beatrice —

CENCI

Said she ?  
Speak, pale slave ! what

ANDREA

My Lord, 'twas what she looked ; she said,  
“ Go tell my father that I see the gulf  
Of Hell between us two, which he may pass ;  
I will not.”

[*Exit ANDREA.*]

CENCI

Go thou quick, Lucretia,  
Tell her to come ; yet let her understand  
Her coming is consent ; and say, moreover,  
That if she come not I will curse her.  
[*Exit LUCRETIA.*]

Ha !

With what but with a father's curse doth God  
Panic-strike armèd victory, and make pale  
Cities in their prosperity ? The world's Father  
Must grant a parent's prayer against his child,  
Be he who asks even what men call me.  
Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers  
Awe her before I speak ? for I on them  
Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.

*Enter LUCRETIA*

Well ; what ? Speak, wretch !



## LUCRETIA

She said, "I cannot come ;  
Go tell my father that I see a torrent  
Of his own blood raging between us."

CENCI (*kneeling*)

God,  
Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh,  
Which thou hast made my daughter; this my  
blood,  
This particle of my divided being ;  
Or rather, this my bane and my disease,  
Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil,  
Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant  
To aught good use; if her bright loveliness  
Was kindled to illumine this dark world;  
If, nursed by thy selectest dew of love,  
Such virtues blossom in her as should make  
The peace of life, I pray thee for my sake,  
As thou the common God and Father art  
Of her, and me, and all; reverse that doom!  
Earth, in the name of God, let her food be  
Poison, until she be encrusted round  
With leprous stains! Heaven, rain upon her  
head  
The blistering drops of the Maremma's dew  
Till she be speckled like a toad; parch up  
Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs  
To loathed lameness! All-beholding sun,  
Strike in thine envy those life-darting eyes  
With thine own blinding beams!

## LUCRETIA

Peace, peace !  
For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words.  
When high God grants, he punishes such prayers.

CENCI (*leaping up, and throwing his right hand towards  
Heaven*)

He does his will, I mine ! This in addition,  
That if she have a child —

## LUCRETIA

Horrible thought !

## CENCI

That if she ever have a child — and thou,  
Quick Nature ! I adjure thee by thy God,  
That thou be fruitful in her, and increase  
And multiply, fulfilling his command,  
And my deep imprecation ! — may it be  
A hideous likeness of herself ; that as  
From a distorting mirror she may see  
Her image mixed with what she most abhors,  
Smiling upon her from her nursing breast !  
And that the child may from its infancy  
Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed,  
Turning her mother's love to misery !  
And that both she and it may live until  
It shall repay her care and pain with hate,  
Or what may else be more unnatural ;  
So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs  
Of the loud world to a dishonored grave !

136 *Peace, husband, peace !* Rossetti conj.

Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come,  
Before my words are chronicled in heaven.

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.]

I do not feel as if I were a man,  
But like a fiend appointed to chastise  
The offences of some unremembered world.  
My blood is running up and down my veins;  
A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle;  
I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe;  
My heart is beating with an expectation  
Of horrid joy.

*Enter* LUCRETIA

What? Speak!

LUCRETIA

She bids thee curse;  
And if thy curses, as they cannot do,  
Could kill her soul—

CENCI

She would not come. 'Tis well,  
I can do both; first take what I demand,  
And then extort concession. To thy chamber!  
Fly ere I spurn thee; and beware this night  
That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer  
To come between the tiger and his prey.

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.]

It must be late; mine eyes grow weary dim  
With unaccustomed heaviness of sleep.  
Conscience! O thou most insolent of lies!  
They say that sleep, that healing dew of heaven,  
Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain

Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go,  
First to belie thee with an hour of rest,  
Which will be deep and calm, I feel; and then —  
O multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake  
Thine arches with the laughter of their joy!  
There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven  
As o'er an angel fallen; and upon Earth  
All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things  
Shall, with a spirit of unnatural life,  
Stir and be quickened — even as I am now.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. — *Before the Castle of Petrella. Enter BEATRICE and  
LUCRETIA above on the ramparts.*

BEATRICE

They come not yet.

LUCRETIA

'Tis scarce midnight.

BEATRICE

How slow  
Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed,  
Lags leaden-footed Time!

LUCRETIA

The minutes pass.  
If he should wake before the deed is done?

BEATRICE

O mother! he must never wake again.  
What thou hast said persuades me that our act  
Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell  
Out of a human form.

LUCRETIA

'Tis true he spoke  
Of death and judgment with strange confidence  
For one so wicked ; as a man believing  
In God, yet recking not of good or ill.  
And yet to die without confession ! —

BEATRICE

Oh !

Believe that Heaven is merciful and just,  
And will not add our dread necessity  
To the amount of his offences.

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO, below*

LUCRETIA

See,

They come.

BEATRICE

All mortal things must hasten thus  
To their dark end. Let us go down.

*[Exeunt LUCRETIA and BEATRICE from above.]*

OLIMPIO

How feel you to this work ?

MARZIO

As one who thinks  
A thousand crowns excellent market price  
For an old murderer's life. Your cheeks are pale.

OLIMPIO

It is the white reflection of your own,  
Which you call pale.

MARZIO

Is that their natural hue?

OLIMPIO

Or 'tis my hate, and the deferred desire  
To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.

MARZIO

You are inclined then to this business?

OLIMPIO

Ay,  
If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns  
To kill a serpent which had stung my child,  
I could not be more willing.

*Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA below*

Noble ladies!

BEATRICE

Are ye resolved?

OLIMPIO

Is he asleep?

MARZIO

Is all

Quiet?

LUCRETIA

I mixed an opiate with his drink;  
He sleeps so soundly —

BEATRICE

That his death will be  
But as a change of sin-chastising dreams,

A dark continuance of the hell within him,  
Which God extinguish! But ye are resolved?  
Ye know it is a high and holy deed?

OLIMPIO

We are resolved.

MARZIO

As to the how this act  
Be warranted, it rests with you.

BEATRICE

Well, follow!

OLIMPIO

Hush! Hark! what noise is that?

MARZIO

Ha! some one comes!

BEATRICE

Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest  
Your baby hearts. It is the iron gate,  
Which ye left open, swinging to the wind,  
That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow!  
And be your steps like mine, light, quick and bold.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *An apartment in the Castle. Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA.*

LUCRETIA

They are about it now.

BEATRICE

Nay, it is done.

LUCRETIA

I have not heard him groan.

BEATRICE

He will not groan.

LUCRETIA

What sound is that?

BEATRICE

List! 'tis the tread of feet

About his bed.

LUCRETIA

My God!

If he be now a cold, stiff corpse —

BEATRICE

Oh, fear not

What may be done, but what is left undone;

The act seals all.

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO*

Is it accomplished?

MARZIO

What?

OLIMPIO

Did you not call?

BEATRICE

When?

OLIMPIO

Now.



BEATRICE

I ask if all is over ?

OLIMPIO

We dare not kill an old and sleeping man ;  
His thin gray hair, his stern and reverent brow,  
His veined hands crossed on his heaving breast,  
And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay,  
Quelled me. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.

MARZIO

But I was bolder ; for I chid Olimpio,  
And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave,  
And leave me the reward. And now my knife  
Touched the loose wrinkled throat, when the old  
man  
Stirred in his sleep, and said, “ God ! hear, oh, hear  
A father’s curse ! What, art thou not our father ? ”  
And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost  
Of my dead father speaking through his lips,  
And could not kill him.

BEATRICE

Miserable slaves !

Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man,  
Found ye the boldness to return to me  
With such a deed undone ? Base palterers !  
Cowards and traitors ! Why, the very conscience  
Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge  
Is an equivocation ; it sleeps over  
A thousand daily acts disgracing men ;  
And when a deed, where mercy insults heaven —  
Why do I talk ?

*(Snatching a dagger from one of them, and raising it)*

Hadst thou a tongue to say,  
She murdered her own father, I must do it!  
But never dream ye shall outlive him long!

OLIMPIO

Stop, for God's sake!

MARZIO

I will go back and kill him.

OLIMPIO

Give me the weapon, we must do thy will.

BEATRICE

Take it! Depart! Return!

[*Exeunt OLIMPIO and MARZIO.*

How pale thou art!

We do but that which 'twere a deadly crime  
To leave undone.

LUCRETIA

Would it were done!

BEATRICE

Even whilst  
That doubt is passing through your mind, the  
world

Is conscious of a change. Darkness and hell  
Have swallowed up the vapor they sent forth  
To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath  
Comes, methinks, lighter, and the jellied blood  
Runs freely through my veins. Hark!

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO*

He is —

OLIMPIO

Dead !

MARZIO

We strangled him, that there might be no blood ;  
And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden  
Under the balcony ; 'twill seem it fell.

BEATRICE (*giving them a bag of coin*)

Here take this gold and hasten to your homes.  
And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed  
By that which made me tremble, wear thou this !

*(Clothes him in a rich mantle)*

It was the mantle which my grandfather  
Wore in his high prosperity, and men  
Envied his state ; so may they envy thine.  
Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God  
To a just use. Live long and thrive ! And, mark,  
If thou hast crimes, repent ; this deed is none.

*(A horn is sounded)*

LUCRETIA

Hark, 'tis the castle horn : my God ! it sounds  
Like the last trump.

BEATRICE

Some tedious guest is coming.

LUCRETIA

The drawbridge is let down ; there is a tramp  
Of horses in the court ; fly, hide yourselves !

*[Exeunt OLIMPIO and MARZIO.]*

BEATRICE

Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest ;  
I scarcely need to counterfeit it now ;

The spirit which doth reign within these limbs  
Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep  
Fearless and calm ; all ill is surely past.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. — *Another Apartment in the Castle. Enter on one side the Legate SAVELLA, introduced by a Servant, and on the other LUCRETIA and BERNARDO.*

SAVELLA

Lady, my duty to his Holiness  
Be my excuse that thus unseasonably  
I break upon your rest. I must speak with  
Count Cenci ; doth he sleep ?

LUCRETIA (*in a hurried and confused manner*)

I think he sleeps ;

Yet, wake him not, I pray, spare me awhile.  
He is a wicked and a wrathful man ;  
Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night,  
Which is, I know, a hell of angry dreams,  
It were not well ; indeed it were not well.  
Wait till day break.

(*Aside*) Oh, I am deadly sick !

SAVELLA

I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count  
Must answer charges of the gravest import,  
And suddenly ; such my commission is.

LUCRETIA (*with increased agitation*)

I dare not rouse him, I know none who dare ;  
'Twere perilous ; you might as safely waken

6 a *wrathful*. Shelley, 1821 || *wrathful*, Shelley, 1819.

A serpent, or a corpse in which some fiend  
Were laid to sleep.

SAVELLA

Lady, my moments here  
Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep,  
Since none else dare.

LUCRETIA (*aside*)

Oh, terror! oh, despair!

(*To BERNARDO*)

Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to  
Your father's chamber.

[*Exeunt SAVELLA and BERNARDO.*]

*Enter BEATRICE*

BEATRICE

'Tis a messenger  
Come to arrest the culprit who now stands  
Before the throne of unappealable God.  
Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters,  
Acquit our deed.

LUCRETIA

Oh, agony of fear!  
Would that he yet might live! Even now I heard  
The Legate's followers whisper as they passed  
They had a warrant for his instant death.  
All was prepared by unforbidden means,  
Which we must pay so dearly, having done.  
Even now they search the tower, and find the  
body;  
Now they suspect the truth; now they consult  
Before they come to tax us with the fact.  
Oh, horrible, 'tis all discovered!

## BEATRICE

Mother,  
What is done wisely is done well. Be bold  
As thou art just. 'Tis like a truant child,  
To fear that others know what thou hast done,  
Even from thine own strong consciousness, and  
thus

Write on unsteady eyes and altered cheeks  
All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself,  
And fear no other witness but thy fear.  
For if, as cannot be, some circumstance  
Should rise in accusation, we can blind  
Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,  
Or overbear it with such guiltless pride,  
As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done,  
And what may follow now regards not me.  
I am as universal as the light ;  
Free as the earth-surrounding air ; as firm  
As the world's centre. Consequence, to me,  
Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock,  
But shakes it not.

*(A cry within and tumult)*

## VOICES

Murder ! Murder ! Murder !

*Enter BERNARDO and SAVELLA*

SAVELLA *(to his followers)*

Go, search the castle round ; sound the alarm ;  
Look to the gates, that none escape !

BEATRICE

What now ?

BERNARDO

I know not what to say — my father's dead.

BEATRICE

How, dead ! he only sleeps ; you mistake, brother.  
His sleep is very calm, very like death ;  
'Tis wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps.  
He is not *dead* ?

BERNARDO

Dead ; murdered !

LUCRETIA (*with extreme agitation*)

Oh, no, no !

He is not murdered, though he may be dead ;  
I have alone the keys of those apartments.

SAVELLA

Ha ! is it so ?

BEATRICE

My Lord, I pray excuse us ;  
We will retire ; my mother is not well ;  
She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.

[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA and BEATRICE.]

SAVELLA

Can you suspect who may have murdered him ?

BERNARDO

I know not what to think.

SAVELLA

Can you name any  
Who had an interest in his death?

BERNARDO

Alas!

I can name none who had not, and those most  
Who most lament that such a deed is done ;  
My mother, and my sister, and myself.

SAVELLA

'Tis strange ! There were clear marks of violence.  
I found the old man's body in the moonlight,  
Hanging beneath the window of his chamber  
Among the branches of a pine ; he could not  
Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heaped  
And effortless ; 'tis true there was no blood.  
Favor me, sir — it much imports your house  
That all should be made clear — to tell the ladies  
That I request their presence.

[Exit BERNARDO.]

*Enter Guards, bringing in MARZIO*

GUARD

We have one.

OFFICER

My Lord, we found this ruffian and another  
Lurking among the rocks ; there is no doubt  
But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci ;  
Each had a bag of coin ; this fellow wore



A gold-inwoven robe, which, shining bright  
Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon,  
Betrayed them to our notice ; the other fell  
Desperately fighting.

SAVELLA

What does he confess ?

OFFICER

He keeps firm silence ; but these lines found on him  
May speak.

SAVELLA

Their language is at least sincere.

(*Reads*)

“TO THE LADY BEATRICE.

That the atonement of what my nature sickens  
to conjecture may soon arrive, I send thee, at thy  
brother's desire, those who will speak and do more  
than I dare write.

Thy devoted servant,

ORSINO.”

*Enter* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and BERNARDO

Knowest thou this writing, lady ?

BEATRICE

No.

SAVELLA

Nor thou ?

LUCRETIA (*her conduct throughout the scene is marked by extreme agitation*)

Where was it found ? What is it ? It should be  
Orsino's hand ! It speaks of that strange horror

Which never yet found utterance, but which made  
Between that hapless child and her dead father  
A gulf of obscure hatred.

SAVELLA

Is it so,  
Is it true, Lady, that thy father did  
Such outrages as to awaken in thee  
Unfilial hate ?

BEATRICE

Not hate, 'twas more than hate ;  
This is most true, yet wherefore question me ?

SAVELLA

There is a deed demanding question done ;  
Thou hast a secret which will answer not.

BEATRICE

What sayest ? My Lord, your words are bold  
and rash.

SAVELLA

I do arrest all present in the name  
Of the Pope's Holiness. You must to Rome.

LUCRETIA

Oh, not to Rome ! indeed we are not guilty.

BEATRICE

Guilty ! who dares talk of guilt ? My Lord,  
I am more innocent of parricide  
Than is a child born fatherless. Dear mother,  
Your gentleness and patience are no shield  
For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie,

Which seems, but is not. What! will human laws,  
Rather will ye who are their ministers,  
Bar all access to retribution first,  
And then, when Heaven doth interpose to do  
What ye neglect, arming familiar things  
To the redress of an unwonted crime,  
Make ye the victims who demanded it  
Culprits? 'Tis ye are culprits! That poor wretch  
Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed,  
If it be true he murdered Cenci, was  
A sword in the right hand of justest God.  
Wherefore should I have wielded it? unless  
The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name  
God therefore scruples to avenge.

SAVELLA

You own

That you desired his death?

BEATRICE

It would have been  
A crime no less than his, if for one moment  
That fierce desire had faded in my heart.  
'Tis true I did believe, and hope, and pray,  
Ay, I even knew — for God is wise and just —  
That some strange sudden death hung over him.  
'Tis true that this did happen, and most true  
There was no other rest for me on earth,  
No other hope in Heaven. Now what of this?

SAVELLA

Strange thoughts beget strange deeds; and here  
are both;  
I judge thee not.

## BEATRICE

And yet, if you arrest me,  
You are the judge and executioner  
Of that which is the life of life ; the breath  
Of accusation kills an innocent name,  
And leaves for lame acquittal the poor life  
Which is a mask without it. 'Tis most false  
That I am guilty of foul parricide ;  
Although I must rejoice, for justest cause,  
That other hands have sent my father's soul  
To ask the mercy he denied to me.  
Now leave us free ; stain not a noble house  
With vague surmises of rejected crime ;  
Add to our sufferings and your own neglect  
No heavier sum ; let them have been enough ;  
Leave us the wreck we have.

## SAVELLA

I dare not, Lady.  
I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome.  
There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.

## LUCRETIA

Oh, not to Rome ! Oh, take us not to Rome !

## BEATRICE

Why not to Rome, dear mother ? There as here  
Our innocence is as an armèd heel  
To trample accusation. God is there,  
As here, and with his shadow ever clothes  
The innocent, the injured, and the weak ;  
And such are we. Cheer up, dear Lady ! lean

On me ; collect your wandering thoughts. My  
Lord,

As soon as you have taken some refreshment,  
And had all such examinations made  
Upon the spot as may be necessary  
To the full understanding of this matter,  
We shall be ready. Mother, will you come ?

## LUCRETIA

Ha ! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest  
Self-accusation from our agony !

Will Giacomo be there ? Orsino ? Marzio ?  
All present ; all confronted ; all demanding  
Each from the other's countenance the thing  
Which is in every heart ! Oh, misery !

*(She faints, and is borne out)*

## SAVELLA

She faints ; an ill appearance this.

## BEATRICE

My Lord,

She knows not yet the uses of the world.  
She fears that power is as a beast which grasps  
And loosens not ; a snake whose look transmutes  
All things to guilt which is its nutriment.  
She cannot know how well the supine slaves  
Of blind authority read the truth of things  
When written on a brow of guilelessness ;  
She sees not yet triumphant Innocence  
Stand at the judgment-seat of mortal man,  
A judge and an accuser of the wrong  
Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, my Lord.  
Our suite will join yours in the court below.

*[Exeunt.]*

## ACT V

SCENE I. — *An Apartment in ORSINO'S Palace. Enter ORSINO and GIACOMO.*

GIACOMO

Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end ?  
Oh, that the vain remorse which must chastise  
Crimes done had but as loud a voice to warn  
As its keen sting is mortal to avenge !  
Oh, that the hour when present had cast off  
The mantle of its mystery, and shown  
The ghastly form with which it now returns  
When its scared game is roused, cheering the  
          hounds  
Of conscience to their prey ! Alas, alas !  
It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed,  
To kill an old and hoary-headed father.

ORSINO

It has turned out unluckily, in truth.

GIACOMO

To violate the sacred doors of sleep ;  
To cheat kind nature of the placid death  
Which she prepares for overwearied age ;  
To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul,  
Which might have quenched in reconciling prayers  
A life of burning crimes —

ORSINO

You cannot say  
I urged you to the deed.

GIACOMO

Oh, had I never  
Found in thy smooth and ready countenance  
The mirror of my darkest thoughts ; hadst thou  
Never with hints and questions made me look  
Upon the monster of my thought, until  
It grew familiar to desire —

ORSINO

'Tis thus  
Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts  
Upon the abettors of their own resolve ;  
Or anything but their weak, guilty selves.  
And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril  
In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness  
Of penitence ; confess 'tis fear disguised  
From its own shame that takes the mantle now  
Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe ?

GIACOMO

How can that be ? Already Beatrice,  
Lucretia and the murderer are in prison.  
I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak,  
Sent to arrest us.

ORSINO

I have all prepared  
For instant flight. We can escape even now,  
So we take fleet occasion by the hair.

## GIACOMO

Rather expire in tortures, as I may.  
What! will you cast by self-accusing flight  
Assured conviction upon Beatrice?  
She who alone, in this unnatural work,  
Stands like God's angel ministered upon  
By fiends; avenging such a nameless wrong  
As turns black parricide to piety;  
Whilst we for basest ends — I fear, Orsino,  
While I consider all your words and looks,  
Comparing them with your proposal now,  
That you must be a villain. For what end  
Could you engage in such a perilous crime,  
Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles,  
Even to this gulf? Thou art no liar? No,  
Thou art a lie! Traitor and murderer!  
Coward and slave! But no — defend thyself;

(Drawing)

Let the sword speak what the indignant tongue  
Disdains to brand thee with.

## ORSINO

Put up your weapon.

Is it the desperation of your fear  
Makes you thus rash and sudden with a friend,  
Now ruined for your sake? If honest anger  
Have moved you, know, that what I just pro-  
posed

Was but to try you. As for me, I think  
Thankless affection led me to this point,  
From which, if my firm temper could repent,  
I cannot now recede. Even whilst we speak,



The ministers of justice wait below ;  
 They grant me these brief moments. Now, if you  
 Have any word of melancholy comfort  
 To speak to your pale wife, 'twere best to pass •  
 Out at the postern, and avoid them so.

GIACOMO

O generous friend ! how canst thou pardon me ?  
 Would that my life could purchase thine !

ORSINO

That wish

Now comes a day too late. Haste ; fare thee  
 well !

Hear'st thou not steps along the corridor ?

[Exit GIACOMO.]

I'm sorry for it ; but the guards are waiting  
 At his own gate, and such was my contrivance  
 That I might rid me both of him and them.  
 I thought to act a solemn comedy  
 Upon the painted scene of this new world,  
 And to attain my own peculiar ends  
 By some such plot of mingled good and ill  
 As others weave ; but there arose a Power  
 Which grasped and snapped the threads of my  
 device,  
 And turned it to a net of ruin — Ha !

(A shout is heard)

Is that my name I hear proclaimed abroad ?  
 But I will pass, wrapped in a vile disguise,  
 Rags on my back and a false innocence  
 Upon my face, through the misdeeming crowd,  
 Which judges by what seems. 'Tis easy then,

For a new name and for a country new,  
And a new life fashioned on old desires,  
To change the honors of abandoned Rome.  
And these must be the masks of that within,  
Which must remain unaltered. — Oh, I fear  
That what is past will never let me rest!  
Why, when none else is conscious, but myself,  
Of my misdeeds, should my own heart's contempt  
Trouble me? Have I not the power to fly  
My own reproaches? Shall I be the slave  
Of — what? A word? which those of this false  
world

Employ against each other, not themselves,  
As men wear daggers not for self-offence.  
But if I am mistaken, where shall I  
Find the disguise to hide me from myself,  
As now I skulk from every other eye?

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. — *A Hall of Justice.* CAMILLO, JUDGES, etc., are discovered seated; MARZIO is led in.

FIRST JUDGE

Accused, do you persist in your denial?  
I ask you, are you innocent, or guilty?  
I demand who were the participators  
In your offence. Speak truth, and the whole  
truth.

MARZIO

My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing;  
Olimpio sold the robe to me from which  
You would infer my guilt.

SECOND JUDGE

Away with him!

FIRST JUDGE

Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's kiss,  
Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner  
That you would bandy lover's talk with it,  
Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!

MARZIO

Spare me! Oh, spare! I will confess.

FIRST JUDGE

Then speak.

MARZIO

I strangled him in his sleep.

FIRST JUDGE

Who urged you to it?

MARZIO

His own son Giacomo and the young prelate  
Orsino sent me to Petrella; there  
The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia  
Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I  
And my companion forthwith murdered him.  
Now let me die.

FIRST JUDGE

This sounds as bad as truth.  
Guards, there, lead forth the prisoners.

*Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, guarded*

Look upon this man;  
When did you see him last?

BEATRICE

We never saw him.

MARZIO

You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.

BEATRICE

I know thee! how? where? when?

MARZIO

You know 'twas I  
Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes  
To kill your father. When the thing was done,  
You clothed me in a robe of woven gold,  
And bade me thrive; how I have thriven, you  
see.

You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia,  
You know that what I speak is true.

[BEATRICE advances towards him; he covers his  
face, and shrinks back.

Oh, dart

The terrible resentment of those eyes  
On the dead earth! Turn them away from me!  
They wound; 'twas torture forced the truth. My  
Lords,  
Having said this, let me be led to death.

BEATRICE

Poor wretch, I pity thee; yet stay awhile.

CAMILLO

Guards, lead him not away.

## BEATRICE

Cardinal Camillo,

You have a good repute for gentleness  
And wisdom ; can it be that you sit here  
To countenance a wicked farce like this ?  
When some obscure and trembling slave is  
dragged  
From sufferings which might shake the sternest  
heart  
And bade to answer, not as he believes,  
But as those may suspect or do desire  
Whose questions thence suggest their own reply ;  
And that in peril of such hideous torments  
As merciful God spares even the damned. Speak  
now

The thing you surely know, which is, that you,  
If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel,  
And you were told, " Confess that you did poison  
Your little nephew ; that fair blue-eyed child  
Who was the lodestar of your life ; " and though  
All see, since his most swift and piteous death,  
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and  
time,

And all the things hoped for or done therein,  
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,  
Yet you would say, " I confess anything,"  
And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,  
The refuge of dishonorable death.  
I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert  
My innocence.

59 *thou* || *you*, Rossetti.

CAMILLO (*much moved*)

What shall we think, my Lords?  
Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was  
frozen  
Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul  
That she is guiltless.

JUDGE

Yet she must be tortured.

CAMILLO

I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew  
(If he now lived, he would be just her age;  
His hair, too, was her color, and his eyes  
Like hers in shape, but blue and not so deep)  
As that most perfect image of God's love  
That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.  
She is as pure as speechless infancy!

JUDGE

Well, be her purity on your head, my Lord,  
If you forbid the rack. His Holiness  
Enjoined us to pursue this monstrous crime  
By the severest forms of law; nay, even  
To stretch a point against the criminals.  
The prisoners stand accused of parricide  
Upon such evidence as justifies  
Torture.

BEATRICE

What evidence? This man's?

JUDGE

Even so.

BEATRICE (*to MARZIO*)

Come near. And who art thou, thus chosen forth  
Out of the multitude of living men,  
To kill the innocent?

MARZIO

I am Marzio,  
Thy father's vassal.

BEATRICE

Fix thine eyes on mine ;  
Answer to what I ask.

(*Turning to the Judges*)

I prithee mark  
His countenance ; unlike bold calumny,  
Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks,  
He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends  
His gaze on the blind earth.

(*To MARZIO*)

What ! wilt thou say  
That I did murder my own father ?

MARZIO

Oh !  
Spare me ! My brain swims round — I cannot  
speak —

It was that horrid torture forced the truth.  
Take me away ! Let her not look on me !  
I am a guilty miserable wretch !  
I have said all I know ; now, let me die !

BEATRICE

My Lords, if by my nature I had been  
So stern as to have planned the crime alleged,

Which your suspicions dictate to this slave  
And the rack makes him utter, do you think  
I should have left this two-edged instrument  
Of my misdeed ; this man, this bloody knife,  
With my own name engraven on the hilt,  
Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes,  
For my own death ? that with such horrible need  
For deepest silence I should have neglected  
So trivial a precaution as the making  
His tomb the keeper of a secret written  
On a thief's memory ? What is his poor life ?  
What are a thousand lives ? A parricide  
Had trampled them like dust ; and see, he lives !

*(Turning to MARZIO)*

And thou —

MARZIO

Oh, spare me ! Speak to me no more !  
That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones,  
Wound worse than torture.

*(To the Judges)*

I have told it all ;  
For pity's sake lead me away to death.

CAMILLO

Guards, lead him nearer the Lady Beatrice ;  
He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf  
From the keen breath of the serenest north.

BEATRICE

O thou who tremblest on the giddy verge  
Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me ;  
So mayst thou answer God with less dismay.  
What evil have we done thee ? I, alas !



Have lived but on this earth a few sad years,  
And so my lot was ordered that a father  
First turned the moments of awakening life  
To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope ; and  
then

Stabbed with one blow my everlasting soul,  
And my untainted fame ; and even that peace  
Which sleeps within the core of the heart's heart.  
But the wound was not mortal ; so my hate  
Became the only worship I could lift  
To our great Father, who in pity and love  
Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off ;  
And thus his wrong becomes my accusation.  
And art thou the accuser ? If thou hopest  
Mercy in heaven, show justice upon earth ;  
Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart.  
If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path  
Over the trampled laws of God and man,  
Rush not before thy Judge, and say : " My Maker,  
I have done this and more ; for there was one  
Who was most pure and innocent on earth ;  
And because she endured what never any,  
Guilty or innocent, endured before,  
Because her wrongs could not be told, nor  
thought,

Because thy hand at length did rescue her,  
I with my words killed her and all her kin."  
Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay  
The reverence living in the minds of men  
Towards our ancient house and stainless fame !  
Think what it is to strangle infant pity,  
Cradled in the belief of guileless looks,

Till it become a crime to suffer. Think  
What 'tis to blot with infamy and blood  
All that which shows like innocence, and is —  
Hear me, great God ! — I swear, most innocent ;  
So that the world lose all discrimination  
Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt,  
And that which now compels thee to reply  
To what I ask : Am I, or am I not  
A parricide ?

MARZIO

Thou art not !

JUDGE

What is this ?

MARZIO

I here declare those whom I did accuse  
Are innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty.

JUDGE

Drag him away to torments ; let them be  
Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds  
Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not  
Till he confess.

MARZIO

Torture me as ye will ;  
A keener pang has wrung a higher truth  
From my last breath. She is most innocent !  
Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with  
me !  
I will not give you that fine piece of nature  
To rend and ruin.

[Exit MARZIO, guarded.]

165 pang, Shelley, 1821 || pain, Shelley, 1819.

CAMILLO

What say ye now, my Lords?

JUDGE

Let tortures strain the truth till it be white  
As snow thrice-sifted by the frozen wind.

CAMILLO

Yet stained with blood.

JUDGE (*to BEATRICE*)

Know you this paper, Lady?

BEATRICE

Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here  
As my accuser? Ha! wilt thou be he,  
Who art my judge? Accuser, witness, judge,  
What, all in one? Here is Orsino's name;  
Where is Orsino? Let his eye meet mine.  
What means this scrawl? Alas! ye know not what,  
And therefore on the chance that it may be  
Some evil, will ye kill us?

*Enter an Officer*

OFFICER

Marzio's dead.

JUDGE

What did he say?

OFFICER

Nothing. As soon as we  
Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us,

As one who baffles a deep adversary ;  
And holding his breath died.

JUDGE

There remains nothing  
But to apply the question to those prisoners  
Who yet remain stubborn.

CAMILLO

I overrule  
Further proceedings, and in the behalf  
Of these most innocent and noble persons  
Will use my interest with the Holy Father.

JUDGE

Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. Meanwhile  
Conduct these culprits each to separate cells ;  
And be the engines ready ; for this night,  
If the Pope's resolution be as grave,  
Pious, and just as once, I'll wring the truth  
Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — *The Cell of a Prison.* BEATRICE is discovered asleep  
on a couch.

*Enter* BERNARDO

BERNARDO

How gently slumber rests upon her face,  
Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent,  
Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged.  
After such torments as she bore last night,

How light and soft her breathing comes. Ay me !  
Methinks that I shall never sleep again.  
But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest  
From this sweet folded flower, thus — wake, awake !  
What, sister, canst thou sleep ?

BEATRICE (*awaking*)

I was just dreaming  
That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest  
This cell seems like a kind of Paradise  
After our father's presence.

BERNARDO

Dear, dear sister,  
Would that thy dream were not a dream ! Oh,  
God,  
How shall I tell ?

BEATRICE

What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother ?

•

BERNARDO

Look not so calm and happy, or even whilst  
I stand considering what I have to say,  
My heart will break.

BEATRICE

See now, thou mak'st me weep ;  
How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child,  
If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.

BERNARDO

They have confessed ; they could endure no more  
The tortures —

•

•

## BEATRICE

Ha ! what was there to confess ?

They must have told some weak and wicked lie  
To flatter their tormentors. Have they said  
That they were guilty ? O white innocence,  
That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide  
Thine awful and serenest countenance  
From those who know thee not !

*Enter JUDGE, with LUCRETIA and GIACOMO, guarded*

Ignoble hearts !

For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least  
As mortal as the limbs through which they pass,  
Are centuries of high splendor laid in dust ?  
And that eternal honor, which should live  
Sunlike, above the reek of mortal fame,  
Changed to a mockery and a byword ? What !  
Will you give up these bodies to be dragged  
At horses' heels, so that our hair should sweep  
The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd,  
Who, that they may make our calamity  
Their worship and their spectacle, will leave  
The churches and the theatres as void  
As their own hearts ? Shall the light multitude  
Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity,  
Sad funeral flowers to deck a living corpse,  
Upon us as we pass to pass away,  
And leave — what memory of our having been ?  
Infamy, blood, terror, despair ? O thou,  
Who wert a mother to the parentless,  
Kill not thy child ! let not her wrongs kill thee !  
Brother, lie down with me upon the rack,

28 *least* || *most*, Rossetti conj.

And let us each be silent as a corpse ;  
It soon will be as soft as any grave.  
'Tis but the falsehood it can wring from fear  
Makes the rack cruel.

GIACOMO

They will tear the truth  
Even from thee at last, those cruel pains ;  
For pity's sake say thou art guilty now.

LUCRETIA

Oh, speak the truth ! Let us all quickly die ;  
And after death, God is our judge, not they ;  
He will have mercy on us.

BERNARDO

If indeed  
It can be true, say so, dear sister mine ;  
And then the Pope will surely pardon you,  
And all be well.

JUDGE

Confess, or I will warp  
Your limbs with such keen tortures —

BEATRICE

Tortures ! Turn  
The rack henceforth into a spinning-wheel !  
Torture your dog, that he may tell when last  
He lapped the blood his master shed — not me !  
My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart,  
And of the soul ; ay, of the inmost soul,  
Which weeps within tears as of burning gall  
To see, in this ill world where none are true,

My kindred false to their deserted selves;  
And with considering all the wretched life  
Which I have lived, and its now wretched end;  
And the small justice shown by Heaven and Earth  
To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,  
And what slaves these; and what a world we make,  
The oppressor and the oppressed — such pangs  
compel

My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me?

JUDGE

Art thou not guilty of thy father's death?

BEATRICE

Or wilt thou rather tax high-judging God  
That he permitted such an act as that  
Which I have suffered, and which he beheld;  
Made it unutterable, and took from it  
All refuge, all revenge, all consequence,  
But that which thou hast called my father's death?  
Which is or is not what men call a crime,  
Which either I have done, or have not done;  
Say what ye will. I shall deny no more.  
If ye desire it thus, thus let it be,  
And so an end of all. Now do your will;  
No other pains shall force another word.

JUDGE

She is convicted, but has not confessed.  
Be it enough. Until their final sentence  
Let none have converse with them. You, young  
Lord,  
Linger not here!



BEATRICE

Oh, tear him not away!

JUDGE

Guards! do your duty.

BERNARDO (*embracing* BEATRICE)

Oh! would ye divide

Body from soul?

OFFICER

That is the headsman's business.

[*Exeunt all but* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, *and* GIACOMO.]

GIACOMO

Have I confessed? Is it all over now?

No hope! no refuge! O weak, wicked tongue,  
Which hast destroyed me, would that thou hadst  
been

Cut out and thrown to dogs first! To have  
killed

My father first, and then betrayed my sister —  
Ay, thee! the one thing innocent and pure  
In this black, guilty world — to that which I  
So well deserve! My wife! my little ones!  
Destitute, helpless; and I — Father! God!  
Canst thou forgive even the unforgiving,  
When their full hearts break thus, thus?

(*Covers his face and weeps*)

LUCRETIA

O my child!

To what a dreadful end are we all come!

Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain

Those torments? Oh, that I were all dissolved  
Into these fast and unavailing tears,  
Which flow and feel not!

## BEATRICE

What 'twas weak to do,  
'Tis weaker to lament, once being done;  
Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and  
made  
Our speedy act the angel of his wrath,  
Seems, and but seems, to have abandoned us.  
Let us not think that we shall die for this.  
Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand,  
You had a manly heart. Bear up! bear up!  
O dearest Lady, put your gentle head  
Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile;  
Your eyes look pale, hollow, and overworn,  
With heaviness of watching and slow grief.  
Come, I will sing you some low, sleepy tune,  
Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing,  
Some outworn and unused monotony,  
Such as our country gossips sing and spin,  
Till they almost forget they live. Lie down —  
So, that will do. Have I forgot the words?  
Faith! they are sadder than I thought they were.

## SONG

False friend, wilt thou smile or weep  
When my life is laid asleep?  
Little cares for a smile or a tear,  
The clay-cold corpse upon the bier!  
Farewell! Heigh-ho!  
What is this whispers low?

There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;  
And bitter poison within thy tear.

Sweet sleep! were death like to thee,  
Or if thou couldst mortal be,  
I would close these eyes of pain;  
When to wake? Never again.

O World! farewell!

Listen to the passing bell!  
It says, thou and I must part,  
With a light and a heavy heart.

*(The scene closes)*

SCENE IV. — *A Hall of the Prison. Enter CAMILLO and BERNARDO.*

CAMILLO

The Pope is stern; not to be moved or bent.  
He looked as calm and keen as is the engine  
Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself  
From aught that it inflicts; a marble form,  
A rite, a law, a custom; not a man.  
He frowned, as if to frown had been the trick  
Of his machinery, on the advocates  
Presenting the defences, which he tore  
And threw behind, muttering with hoarse, harsh  
voice —

“Which among ye defended their old father  
Killed in his sleep?” then to another — “Thou  
Dost this in virtue of thy place; ’tis well.”  
He turned to me then, looking deprecation,  
And said these three words, coldly — “They must  
die.”

BERNARDO

And yet you left him not?

CAMILLO

I urged him still ;  
Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong  
Which prompted your unnatural parent's death.  
And he replied — " Paolo Santa Croce  
Murdered his mother yester evening,  
And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife,  
That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the  
young  
Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs.  
Authority, and power, and hoary hair  
Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew,  
You come to ask their pardon ; stay a moment ;  
Here is their sentence ; never see me more  
Till, to the letter, it be all fulfilled."

BERNARDO

Oh, God, not so ! I did believe indeed  
That all you said was but sad preparation  
For happy news. Oh, there are words and looks  
To bend the sternest purpose ! Once I knew  
them,  
Now I forget them at my dearest need.  
What think you if I seek him out, and bathe  
His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears ?  
Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain  
With my perpetual cries, until in rage  
He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample  
Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood

May stain the senseless dust on which he treads,  
And remorse waken mercy? I will do it!  
Oh, wait till I return!

[*Rushes out.*]

CAMILLO

Alas, poor boy!  
A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray  
To the deaf sea.

*Enter* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, *guarded*

BEATRICE

I hardly dare to fear  
That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.

CAMILLO

May God in heaven be less inexorable  
To the Pope's prayers than he has been to mine.  
Here is the sentence and the warrant.

BEATRICE (*wildly*)

Oh,

My God! Can it be possible I have  
To die so suddenly? so young to go  
Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!  
To be nailed down into a narrow place;  
To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more  
Blithe voice of living thing; muse not again  
Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost!  
How fearful! to be nothing! Or to be—  
What? Oh, where am I? Let me not go mad!  
Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts! If there  
should be

No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world —  
The wide, gray, lampless, deep, unpeopled world!  
If all things then should be — my father's spirit,  
His eye, his voice, his touch surrounding me ;  
The atmosphere and breath of my dead life !  
If sometimes, as a shape more like himself,  
Even the form which tortured me on earth,  
Masked in gray hairs and wrinkles, he should  
    come,  
And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix  
His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down !  
For was he not alone omnipotent  
On Earth, and ever present ? even though dead,  
Does not his spirit live in all that breathe,  
And work for me and mine still the same ruin,  
Scorn, pain, despair ? Who ever yet returned  
To teach the laws of death's untrodden realm ?  
Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,  
Oh, whither, whither ?

## LUCRETIA

Trust in God's sweet love,  
The tender promises of Christ ; ere night,  
Think we shall be in Paradise.

## BEATRICE

    'Tis past !  
Whatever comes, my heart shall sink no more.  
And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill ;  
How tedious, false, and cold seem all things ! I  
Have met with much injustice in this world ;  
No difference has been made by God or man,  
Or any power moulding my wretched lot,

'Twixt good or evil, as regarded me.  
I am cut off from the only world I know,  
From light, and life, and love, in youth's sweet  
prime.  
You do well telling me to trust in God ;  
I hope I do trust in him. In whom else  
Can any trust? And yet my heart is cold.

*(During the latter speeches GIACOMO has retired conversing with  
CAMILLO, who now goes out ; GIACOMO advances)*

## GIACOMO

Know you not, mother — sister, know you not ?  
Bernardo even now is gone to implore  
The Pope to grant our pardon.

## LUCRETIA

Child, perhaps  
It will be granted. We may all then live  
To make these woes a tale for distant years.  
Oh, what a thought ! It gushes to my heart  
Like the warm blood.

## BEATRICE

Yet both will soon be cold.  
Oh, trample out that thought ! Worse than de-  
spair,  
Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope ;  
It is the only ill which can find place  
Upon the giddy, sharp, and narrow hour  
Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost  
That it should spare the eldest flower of spring ;  
Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch  
Even now a city stands, strong, fair, and free ;

Now stench and blackness yawn, like death. Oh,  
plead

With famine, or wind-walking pestilence,  
Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man —  
Cruel, cold, formal man; righteous in words,  
In deeds a Cain. No, mother, we must die;  
Since such is the reward of innocent lives,  
Such the alleviation of worst wrongs.  
And whilst our murderers live, and hard, cold men,  
Smiling and slow, walk through a world of tears  
To death as to life's sleep; 'twere just the grave  
Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure  
Death,

And wind me in thine all-embracing arms !  
Like a fond mother hide me in thy bosom,  
And rock me to the sleep from which none wake.  
Live ye, who live, subject to one another  
As we were once, who now —

*BERNARDO rushes in*

BERNARDO

Oh, horrible !

That tears, that looks, that hope poured forth in  
prayer,

Even till the heart is vacant and despairs,  
Should all be vain ! The ministers of death  
Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw  
Blood on the face of one — what if 'twere fancy ?  
Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth  
Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off  
As if 'twere only rain. O life ! O world !  
Cover me ! let me be no more ! To see



That perfect mirror of pure innocence  
Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,  
Shivered to dust! To see thee, Beatrice,  
Who made all lovely thou didst look upon —  
Thee, light of life — dead, dark! while I say,  
    sister,  
To hear I have no sister; and thou, mother,  
Whose love was as a bond to all our loves —  
Dead! the sweet bond broken!

*Enter CAMILLO and Guards*

    They come! Let me  
Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves  
Are blighted — white — cold. Say farewell, before  
Death chokes that gentle voice! Oh, let me hear  
You speak!

BEATRICE

    Farewell, my tender brother. Think  
Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now;  
And let mild, pitying thoughts lighten for thee  
Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,  
But tears and patience. One thing more, my  
    child;  
For thine own sake be constant to the love  
Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I,  
Though wrapped in a strange cloud of crime and  
    shame,  
Lived ever holy and unstained. And though  
Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name  
Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow  
For men to point at as they pass, do thou  
Forbear, and never think a thought unkind

136 was as a, Rossetti || was a, Shelley, 1819, 1821.

Of those who perhaps love thee in their graves.  
So mayest thou die as I do ; fear and pain  
Being subdued. Farewell ! Farewell ! Farewell !

BERNARDO

I cannot say farewell !

CAMILLO

O Lady Beatrice !

BEATRICE

Give yourself no unnecessary pain,  
My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, mother, tie  
My girdle for me, and bind up this hair  
In any simple knot ; ay, that does well.  
And yours I see is coming down. How often  
Have we done this for one another ; now  
We shall not do it any more. My Lord,  
We are quite ready. Well — 'tis very well.



# **THE MASK OF ANARCHY**

*The Mask of Anarchy* was published, with Shelley's name, at London, in 1832, under the imprint of Bradbury and Evans, for Edward Moxon. The volume was edited by Leigh Hunt. The poem had been composed in the fall of 1819, soon after the riot at Manchester on August 16, toward the close of Shelley's residence at the Villa Valvasano, near Leghorn, or during his stay at Florence. It was sent to Hunt for insertion in the *Examiner*, but its publication at that time was deemed inexpedient by him. The MS. sent to Hunt, in the hand of Mrs. Shelley, with corrections in Shelley's hand, is in the possession of Mr. Townshend Mayer, and has been carefully described by Forman. It affords several variations from Hunt's text. A MS. in Shelley's hand, given by Mrs. Shelley to Sir John Bowring in 1826, of which a facsimile was published by the Shelley Society in 1887, is the authority for the text. The original is in the possession of Mr. Thomas J. Wise. Mrs. Shelley, in her editions of 1839, differs from both MSS. and the Hunt text.

## THE MASK OF ANARCHY

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE MASSACRE AT  
MANCHESTER

### I

As I lay asleep in Italy,  
There came a voice from over the sea,  
And with great power it forth led me  
To walk in the visions of Poesy.

### II

I met Murder on the way —  
He had a mask like Castlereagh ;  
Very smooth he looked, yet grim ;  
Seven bloodhounds followed him.

### III

All were fat ; and well they might  
Be in admirable plight,  
For one by one, and two by two,  
He tossed them human hearts to chew,  
Which from his wide cloak he drew.

### IV

Next came Fraud, and he had on,  
Like Eldon, an ermined gown ;

iv. 2 *Like Eldon*, Hunt MS., Forman || *Like Lord Eldon*, Wise MS., Hunt, 1832 ; *ermined*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832 || *ermine*, Mrs. Shelley, 1830<sup>1</sup>.

His big tears, for he wept well,  
Turned to mill-stones as they fell ;

## V

And the little children, who  
Round his feet played to and fro,  
Thinking every tear a gem,  
Had their brains knocked out by them.

## VI

Clothed with the Bible as with light,  
And the shadows of the night,  
Like Sidmouth, next Hypocrisy  
On a crocodile rode by.

## VII

And many more Destructions played  
In this ghastly masquerade,  
All disguised, even to the eyes,  
Like bishops, lawyers, peers or spies.

## VIII

Last came Anarchy ; he rode  
On a white horse splashed with blood ;  
He was pale even to the lips,  
Like Death in the Apocalypse.

## IX

And he wore a kingly crown ;  
In his grasp a sceptre shone ;

vi. 1 *with the* || *in the*, Wise MS. cancelled.

2 *shadows*, Wise MS., Hunt, 1832 || *shadow*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

vii. 4 or || *and*, Wise MS.

ix. 2 *And in his grasp*, Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832 || *And*, omit,  
*hand*, Wise MS., Hunt MS. cancelled, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

On his brow this mark I saw —  
“ I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW ! ”

## X

With a pace stately and fast,  
Over English land he passed,  
Trampling to a mire of blood  
The adoring multitude.

## XI

And a mighty troop around  
With their trampling shook the ground,  
Waving each a bloody sword  
For the service of their Lord.

## XII

And, with glorious triumph, they  
Rode through England, proud and gay,  
Drunk as with intoxication  
Of the wine of desolation.

## XIII

O'er fields and towns, from sea to sea,  
Passed that Pageant swift and free,  
Tearing up, and trampling down,  
Till they came to London town.

## XIV

And each dweller, panic-stricken,  
Felt his heart with terror sicken,

ix. 3 *And on*, Hunt, 1832.

xii. 2 *Rode* || *Passed*, Wise MS. cancelled.

xiii. 2 *that*, Wise MS. || *the*, Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832.



Hearing the tempestuous cry  
Of the triumph of Anarchy.

## XV

For with pomp to meet him came,  
Clothed in arms like blood and flame,  
The hired murderers who did sing,  
"Thou art God, and Law, and King.

## XVI

"We have waited, weak and lone,  
For thy coming, Mighty One!  
Our purses are empty, our swords are cold,  
Give us glory, and blood, and gold."

## XVII

Lawyers and priests, a motley crowd,  
To the earth their pale brows bowed;  
Like a bad prayer not over loud,  
Whispering — "Thou art Law and God!"

## XVIII

Then all cried with one accord,  
"Thou art King, and God, and Lord;  
Anarchy, to thee we bow,  
Be thy name made holy now!"

xiv. 3 *tempestuous*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832 || *tremendous*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

xv. 1 *him* || *them*, Wise MS. cancelled.

xviii. 2 *God*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832 || *Law*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

## XIX

And Anarchy, the Skeleton,  
Bowed and grinned to every one,  
As well as if his education  
Had cost ten millions to the nation.

## XX

For he knew the palaces  
Of our kings were rightly his ;  
His the sceptre, crown, and globe,  
And the gold-inwoven robe.

## XXI

So he sent his slaves before  
To seize upon the Bank and Tower,  
And was proceeding with intent  
To meet his pensioned parliament,

## XXII

When one fled past, a maniac maid,  
And her name was Hope, she said ;  
But she looked more like Despair,  
And she cried out in the air :

## XXIII

“ My father Time is weak and gray  
With waiting for a better day ;

xx. 1 *For* || *And*, Wise MS. cancelled.

xx. 2 *rightly*, Wise MS. || *nightly*, Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832.

xxii. 1 *one passed*, Hunt MS. cancelled.

See how idiot-like he stands,  
Fumbling with his palsied hands!

## XXIV

"He has had child after child,  
And the dust of death is piled  
Over every one but me.  
Misery! oh, misery!"

## XXV

Then she lay down in the street,  
Right before the horses' feet,  
Expecting with a patient eye  
Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy;

## XXVI

When between her and her foes  
A mist, a light, an image rose, —  
Small at first, and weak, and frail,  
Like the vapor of a vale;

## XXVII

Till as clouds grow on the blast,  
Like tower-crowned giants striding fast,  
And glare with lightnings as they fly,  
And speak in thunder to the sky,

## XXVIII

It grew — a Shape arrayed in mail  
Brighter than the viper's scale,

xxiii. 4 *Fumbling*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832 || *Trembling*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

xxiv. 2 *And* || *But*, Wise MS. cancelled.

xxvi. 4 *vapors*, Hunt MS. cancelled, *a vale*, Wise MS., Hunt MS. || *the*, Hunt, 1832.

And upborne on wings whose grain  
Was as the light of sunny rain.

## XXIX

On its helm, seen far away,  
A planet, like the Morning's, lay ;  
And those plumes its light rained through,  
Like a shower of crimson dew.

## XXX

With step as soft as wind it passed  
O'er the heads of men — so fast  
That they knew the presence there,  
And looked — but all was empty air.

## XXXI

As flowers beneath May's footstep waken,  
As stars from Night's loose hair are shaken,  
As waves arise when loud winds call,  
Thoughts sprung where'er that step did fall.

## XXXII

And the prostrate multitude  
Looked — and ankle-deep in blood,  
Hope, that maiden most serene,  
Was walking with a quiet mien ;

xxviii. 4 *as*, Wise MS., Hunt, 1832 || *like*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

xxix. 3 *its*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Rossetti, 1870 || *it*, Hunt, 1832.

xxx. 4 *but*, Wise MS. || *and*, Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832.

xxxi. 1 *May's footstep*, Wise MS., Hunt MS. Forman || *the footstep*, Hunt, 1832, *May's footsteps*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

xxxi. 4 *Thoughts* || *Hopes*, Wise MS. cancelled.

## XXXIII

And Anarchy, the ghastly birth,  
Lay dead earth upon the earth ;  
The Horse of Death, tameless as wind  
Fled, and with his hoofs did grind  
To dust the murderers thronged behind.

## XXXIV

A rushing light of clouds and splendor,  
A sense, awakening and yet tender,  
Was heard and felt — and at its close  
These words of joy and fear arose,

## XXXV

As if their own indignant earth,  
Which gave the sons of England birth,  
Had felt their blood upon her brow,  
And shuddering with a mother's throes

## XXXVI

Had turned every drop of blood,  
By which her face had been bedewed,  
To an accent unwithstood,  
As if her heart cried out aloud :

## XXXVII

“ Men of England, heirs of glory,  
Heroes of unwritten story,  
Nurslings of one mighty Mother,  
Hopes of her, and one another :

xxxv. 3 *their* || *the*, Hunt MS. cancelled.

xxxvi. 4 *cried out*, Wise MS. || *had cried*, Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832.

## XXXVIII

“ Rise like lions after slumber,  
In unvanquishable number ;  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you —  
Ye are many, they are few.

## XXXIX

“ What is Freedom ? — Ye can tell  
That which Slavery is too well,  
For its very name has grown  
To an echo of your own.

## XL

“ 'Tis to work, and have such pay  
As just keeps life from day to day  
In your limbs, as in a cell,  
For the tyrants' use to dwell,

## XLI

“ So that ye for them are made  
Loom, and plough, and sword, and spade —  
With or without your own will bent  
To their defence and nourishment.

## XLII

“ 'Tis to see your children weak  
With their mothers pine and peak,  
When the winter winds are bleak —  
They are dying whilst I speak.

## XLIII

" 'Tis to hunger for such diet,  
As the rich man in his riot  
Casts to the fat dogs that lie  
Surfeiting beneath his eye.

## XLIV

" 'Tis to let the Ghost of Gold  
Take from toil a thousand-fold  
More than e'er its substance could  
In the tyrannies of old ;

## XLV

" Paper coin — that forgery  
Of the title deeds which ye  
Hold to something of the worth  
Of the inheritance of Earth.

## XLVI

" 'Tis to be a slave in soul,  
And to hold no strong control  
Over your own will, but be  
All that others make of ye.

## XLVII

" And at length when ye complain  
With a murmur weak and vain,  
'Tis to see the Tyrant's crew  
Ride over your wives and you —  
Blood is on the grass like dew !

xlv. 3 *of* || *from*, Wise MS.

xlvi. 3 *will*, Wise MS. || *wills*, Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832.

## XLVIII

“ Then it is to feel revenge,  
Fiercely thirsting to exchange  
Blood for blood — and wrong for wrong :  
Do not thus when ye are strong !

## XLIX

“ Birds find rest in narrow nest,  
When weary of their wingèd quest ;  
Beasts find fare in woody lair,  
When storm and snow are in the air.

## L

“ Horses, oxen, have a home,  
When from daily toil they come ;  
Household dogs, when the wind roars,  
Find a home within warm doors.

## LI

“ Asses, swine, have litter spread,  
And with fitting food are fed ;  
All things have a home but one —  
Thou, O Englishman, hast none !

## LII

“ This is Slavery ; savage men,  
Or wild beasts within a den,  
Would endure not as ye do —  
But such ills they never knew.

xlix. 2 *their*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *the*, Hunt, 1832.

xlix. 3 *woody* || *rocky*, Wise MS. cancelled.

L 1-4 Wise MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || omit. Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832.



## LIII

“What art thou, Freedom? Oh, could slaves  
 Answer from their living graves  
 This demand, tyrants would flee  
 Like a dream's dim imagery.

## LIV

“Thou art not, as impostors say,  
 A shadow soon to pass away,  
 A superstition and a name  
 Echoing from the cave of Fame.

## LV

“For the laborer thou art bread  
 And a comely table spread,  
 From his daily labor come  
 In a neat and happy home.

## LVI

“Thou art clothes, and fire, and food,  
 For the trampled multitude;  
 No — in countries that are free  
 Such starvation cannot be  
 As in England now we see.

## LVII

“To the rich thou art a check;  
 When his foot is on the neck  
 Of his victim, thou dost make  
 That he treads upon a snake.

liv. 4 *cave*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *caves*,  
 Hunt MS. cancelled, Hunt, 1832.

lv. 4 *In*, Wise MS., Hunt, 1832 || *To*, Hunt MS., *Forman*.

## LVIII

“Thou art Justice — ne’er for gold  
 May thy righteous laws be sold,  
 As laws are in England ; thou  
 Shield’st alike both high and low.

## LIX

“Thou art Wisdom — freemen never  
 Dream that God will damn forever  
 All who think those things untrue  
 Of which priests make such ado.

## LX

“Thou art Peace — never by thee  
 Would blood and treasure wasted be,  
 As tyrants wasted them, when all  
 Leagued to quench thy flame in Gaul.

## LXI

“What if English toil and blood  
 Was poured forth, even as a flood ?  
 It availed, O Liberty !  
 To dim, but not extinguish thee.

## LXII

“Thou art Love — the rich have kissed  
 Thy feet, and, like him following Christ,

lviii. 4 *both*, Wise MS. || *the*, Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832.

lix. 1 *freemen*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *freedom*, Hunt, 1832.

lix. 2 *dream*, Hunt MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *dreams*, Hunt, 1832.  
*damn*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832 || *doom*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

lx. 3 *those*, Hunt MS. cancelled.

Give their substance to the free  
And through the rough world follow thee ;

## LXIII

“ Or turn their wealth to arms, and make  
 L War for thy belovèd sake  
 On wealth and war and fraud, whence they  
 Drew the power which is their prey.

## LXIV

“ Science, Poetry and Thought  
 Are thy lamps ; they make the lot  
 Of the dwellers in a cot  
 Such they curse their maker not.

## LXV

“ Spirit, Patience, Gentleness,  
 All that can adorn and bless,  
 Art thou — let deeds, not words, express  
 Thine exceeding loveliness.

## LXVI

“ Let a great Assembly be  
 Of the fearless and the free

lxii. 3 *give*, Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832 || *given*, Wise MS., Hunt MS. cancelled, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

lxii. 4 *follow*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832 || *followed*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

lxiii. 1 *Or*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Forman || *Oh*, Hunt, 1832.

lxiv. 1 *Science, Poetry*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Forman || *Science and Poetry*, Hunt, 1832.

lxiv. 4 Wise MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *So serene they curse it not*, Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832.

lxv. 3 *let deeds not* || *but deeds not*, Hunt MS. cancelled ; *how can*, Wise MS. cancelled.

lxvi. 2 *and*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *of*, Hunt, 1832.

On some spot of English ground,  
Where the plains stretch wide around.

## LXVII

“ Let the blue sky overhead,  
The green earth on which ye tread,  
All that must eternal be,  
Witness the solemnity.

## LXVIII

“ From the corners uttermost  
Of the bounds of English coast;  
From every hut, village and town,  
Where those, who live and suffer, moan  
For others’ misery or their own;

## LXIX

“ From the workhouse and the prison,  
Where pale as corpses newly risen,  
Women, children, young and old,  
Groan for pain, and weep for cold;

## LXX

“ From the haunts of daily life,  
Where is waged the daily strife

lxviii. 4 *those* || *all*, Wise MS. cancelled.

lxviii. 5 *or*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *and*, Hunt, 1832.

lxviii.-lxix. : —

From the cities where from caves,  
Like the dead from putrid graves,  
Troops of starvelings gliding come,  
Living Tenants of a tomb.

Wise MS. *Troops* || *Hosts*, Wise MS. cancelled. *Tenants of a living tomb*, Wise MS. cancelled.

lxix. 2 *corpses* || *spectres*, Wise MS. cancelled.

With common wants and common cares,  
Which sows the human heart with tares ;

## LXXI

“ Lastly, from the palaces  
Where the murmur of distress  
Echoes, like the distant sound  
Of a wind alive, around

## LXXII

“ Those prison-halls of wealth and fashion,  
Where some few feel such compassion  
For those who groan, and toil, and wail,  
As must make their brethren pale ; —

## LXXIII

“ Ye who suffer woes untold,  
Or to feel or to behold  
Your lost country bought and sold  
With a price of blood and gold :

## LXXIV

“ Let a vast assembly be,  
And with great solemnity  
Declare with measured words that ye  
Are, as God has made ye, free !

## LXXV

“ Be your strong and simple words  
Keen to wound as sharpened swords ;

lxx. 4 *sows*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Forman || *sow*, Hunt, 1832.

lxxiii. 4 *With* || *For*, Wise MS. cancelled, Wise MS.

lxxiv. 3 *measured*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Hunt 1832 || *ne'er-said*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

And wide as targes let them be,  
With their shade to cover ye.

## LXXVI

“ Let the tyrants pour around  
With a quick and startling sound,  
Like the loosening of a sea,  
Troops of armed emblazonry.

## LXXVII

“ Let the charged artillery drive  
Till the dead air seems alive  
With the clash of clanging wheels  
And the tramp of horses' heels.

## LXXVIII

“ Let the fixed bayonet  
Gleam with sharp desire to wet  
Its bright point in English blood,  
Looking keen as one for food.

## LXXIX

“ Let the horsemen's scimitars  
Wheel and flash, like sphereless stars  
Thirsting to eclipse their burning  
In a sea of death and mourning.

## LXXX

“ Stand ye calm and resolute,  
Like a forest close and mute,

lxviii. 2 *sharp* || *keen*, Wise MS. cancelled.

4 *keen* || *sharp*, Wise MS. cancelled.

With folded arms, and looks which are  
Weapons of unvanquished war.

## LXXXI

“And let Panic, who outspeeds  
The career of armèd steeds,  
Pass, a disregarded shade,  
Through your phalanx undismayed.

## LXXXII

“Let the laws of your own land,  
Good or ill, between ye stand,  
Hand to hand, and foot to foot,  
Arbiters of the dispute: —

## LXXXIII

“The old laws of England — they  
Whose reverend heads with age are gray,  
Children of a wiser day;  
And whose solemn voice must be  
Thine own echo — Liberty!

## LXXXIV

“On those who first should violate  
Such sacred heralds in their state  
Rest the blood that must ensue;  
And it will not rest on you.

## LXXXV

“And if then the tyrants dare,  
Let them ride among you there,  
Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew;  
What they like, that let them do.

lxxx. 4 Wise MS. || *of an*, Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832.

## LXXXVI

"With folded arms and steady eyes,  
And little fear, and less surprise,  
Look upon them as they slay,  
Till their rage has died away.

## LXXXVII

"Then they will return with shame  
To the place from which they came ;  
And the blood thus shed will speak  
In hot blushes on their cheek.

## LXXXVIII

"Every woman in the land  
Will point at them as they stand ;  
They will hardly dare to greet  
Their acquaintance in the street.

## LXXXIX

"And the bold true warriors,  
Who have hugged Danger in wars,  
Will turn to those who would be free,  
Ashamed of such base company.

## XC

"And that slaughter to the Nation  
Shall steam up like inspiration,  
Eloquent, oracular ;  
A volcano heard afar.

**lxxxvi.** 3 *slay*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *stay*, Hunt, 1832.

**lxxxix.** 2 *in wars*, Wise MS., Hunt MS., Hunt, 1832 || *in the wars*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.



## XCI

“ And these words shall then become  
Like oppression’s thundered doom,  
Ringing through each heart and brain,  
Heard again — again — again !

## XCII

“ Rise like lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number !  
Shake your chains to earth, like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you —  
Ye are many, they are few ! ”

xci. 1 *then become* || *be the beacon*, Hunt MS. cancelled.

## **PETER BELL THE THIRD**

i

*Peter Bell the Third* was published in Mrs. Shelley's second edition of the collected poems, 1839. The poem was composed at Florence during the latter part of October, 1819, and sent, November 2, to Hunt to be published by Ollier without Shelley's name. Why it was not issued is unknown. John Hamilton Reynolds had published, early in the year, *Peter Bell, a Lyrical Ballad*, a satire upon Wordsworth's poetry. A few days later *Peter Bell, a Lyrical Ballad*, by Wordsworth, appeared. Both these poems were noticed in Hunt's *Examiner*, April 26 and May 3. It is presumed that these reviews are the criticisms referred to by Mrs. Shelley as reaching Shelley at Leghorn and affording him much amusement. His own poem, thus suggested, was due less to dissatisfaction with Wordsworth's verse than with his principles.

## PETER BELL THE THIRD

BY

MICHING MALLECHO, ESQ.

Is it a party in a parlor,  
Crammed just as they on earth were crammed,  
Some sipping punch — some sipping tea ;  
But, as you by their faces see,  
All silent, and all —— damned !

*Peter Bell*, by W. WORDSWORTH.

OPHELIA. — What means this, my lord ?

HAMLET. — Marry, this is Miching Mallecho ; it means mischief.

SHAKESPEARE.

### DEDICATION

TO THOMAS BROWN, ESQ., THE YOUNGER, H. F.

DEAR TOM, — Allow me to request you to introduce Mr. Peter Bell to the respectable family of the Fudges. Although he may fall short of those very considerable personages in the more active properties which characterize the Rat and the Apostate, I suspect that even you, their historian, will confess that he surpasses them in the more peculiarly legitimate qualification of intolerable dulness.

You know Mr. Examiner Hunt ; well — it was he who presented me to two of the Mr. Bells. My intimacy with the younger Mr. Bell naturally sprung from this introduction to his brothers. And in presenting him to you I have the satisfaction of being able to assure you that he is considerably the dullest of the three.

There is this particular advantage in an acquaintance with any one of the Peter Bells that, if you know one Peter Bell, you know three Peter Bells ; they are not one, but three ;

not three, but one. (An awful mystery, which, after having caused torrents of blood and having been hymned by groans enough to deafen the music of the spheres, is at length illustrated to the satisfaction of all parties in the theological world by the nature of Mr. Peter Bell.)

Peter is a polyhedric Peter, or a Peter with many sides. He changes colors like a chameleon and his coat like a snake. He is a Proteus of a Peter. He was at first sublime, pathetic, impressive, profound ; then dull ; then prosy and dull ; and now dull — oh, so very dull ! it is an ultra-legitimate dullness.

You will perceive that it is not necessary to consider Hell and the Devil as supernatural machinery. The whole scene of my epic is in "this world which is" — so Peter informed us before his conversion to *White Obi* —

The world of all of us, and where  
We find our happiness, or not at all.

Let me observe that I have spent six or seven days in composing this sublime piece ; the orb of my moon-like genius has made the fourth part of its revolution round the dull earth which you inhabit, driving you mad, while it has retained its calmness and its splendor, and I have been fitting this its last phase "to occupy a permanent station in the literature of my country."

Your works, indeed, dear Tom, sell better ; but mine are far superior. The public is no judge ; posterity sets all to rights.

Allow me to observe that so much has been written of Peter Bell that the present history can be considered only, like the *Iliad*, as a continuation of that series of cyclic poems which have already been candidates for bestowing immortality upon, at the same time that they receive it from, his character and adventures. In this point of view I have violated no rule of syntax in beginning my composition with a conjunction ; the full stop, which closes the poem continued by me, being, like the full stops at the end of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, a full stop of a very qualified import.

Hoping that the immortality which you have given to the

Fudges, you will receive from them ; and in the firm expectation that when London shall be an habitation of bitterns, when St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey shall stand, shapeless and nameless ruins, in the midst of an unpeopled marsh ; when the piers of Waterloo Bridge shall become the nuclei of islets of reeds and osiers, and cast the jagged shadows of their broken arches on the solitary stream, some transatlantic commentator will be weighing in the scales of some new and now unimagined system of criticism the respective merits of the Bells and the Fudges and their historians,

I remain, dear Tom,

Yours sincerely,

MICHING MALLECHO.

*December 1, 1819.*

P. S. — Pray excuse the date of place ; so soon as the profits of the publication come in, I mean to hire lodgings in a more respectable street.



## PETER BELL

### PROLOGUE

PETER BELLS, one, two and three,  
O'er the wide world wandering be.  
First, the antenatal Peter,  
Wrapped in weeds of the same metre,  
The so long predestined raiment,  
Clothed in which to walk his way meant  
The second Peter ; whose ambition  
Is to link the proposition,  
As the mean of two extremes,  
(This was learned from Aldrich's themes),  
Shielding from the guilt of schism  
The orthodoxal syllogism ;  
The First Peter — he who was  
Like the shadow in the glass  
Of the second, yet unripe,  
His substantial antitype.  
Then came Peter Bell the Second,  
Who henceforward must be reckoned  
The body of a double soul,  
And that portion of the whole  
Without which the rest would seem  
Ends of a disjointed dream.  
And the Third is he who has  
O'er the grave been forced to pass  
To the other side, which is —  
Go and try else — just like this.



Peter Bell the First was Peter  
Smugger, milder, softer, neater,  
Like the soul before it is  
Born from *that* world into *this*.  
The next Peter Bell was he,  
Predevote, like you and me,  
To good or evil, as may come ;  
His was the severer doom, —  
For he was an evil Cotter,  
And a polygamic Potter.  
And the last is Peter Bell,  
Damned since our first parents fell,  
Damned eternally to Hell —  
Surely he deserves it well !

## PART THE FIRST

## DEATH

## I

AND Peter Bell, when he had been  
With fresh-imported Hell-fire warmed,  
Grew serious — from his dress and mien  
'Twas very plainly to be seen  
Peter was quite reformed.

## II

His eyes turned up, his mouth turned down ;  
His accent caught a nasal twang ;  
He oiled his hair ; there might be heard  
The grace of God in every word  
Which Peter said or sang.

## III

But Peter now grew old, and had  
    An ill no doctor could unravel ;  
His torments almost drove him mad ;  
Some said it was a fever bad ;  
    Some swore it was the gravel.

## IV

His holy friends then came about,  
    And with long preaching and persuasion  
Convinced the patient that without  
The smallest shadow of a doubt  
    He was predestined to damnation.

## V

They said — “ Thy name is Peter Bell ;  
    Thy skin is of a brimstone hue ;  
Alive or dead — ay, sick or well —  
The one God made to rhyme with hell ;  
    The other, I think, rhymes with you.”

## VI

Then Peter set up such a yell !  
    The nurse, who with some water gruel  
Was climbing up the stairs, as well  
As her old legs could climb them — fell,  
    And broke them both — the fall was cruel.

## VII

The Parson from the casement leapt  
    Into the lake of Windermere ;  
And many an eel — though no adept

In God's right reason for it — kept  
Gnawing his kidneys half a year.

## VIII

And all the rest rushed through the door,  
And tumbled over one another,  
And broke their skulls. — Upon the floor  
Meanwhile sat Peter Bell, and swore,  
And cursed his father and his mother ;

## IX

And raved of God, and sin, and death,  
Blaspheming like an infidel ;  
And said that with his clenched teeth  
He'd seize the earth from underneath  
And drag it with him down to hell.

## X

As he was speaking came a spasm  
And wrenched his gnashing teeth asunder ;  
Like one who sees a strange phantasm  
He lay, — there was a silent chasm  
Betwixt his upper jaw and under.

## XI

And yellow death lay on his face ;  
And a fixed smile that was not human  
Told, as I understand the case,  
That he was gone to the wrong place.  
I heard all this from the old woman.

## XII

Then there came down from Langdale Pike  
A cloud, with lightning, wind and hail ;  
It swept over the mountains like  
An ocean, — and I heard it strike  
The woods and crags of Grasmere vale.

## XIII

And I saw the black storm come  
Nearer, minute after minute ;  
Its thunder made the cataracts dumb ;  
With hiss, and clash, and hollow hum,  
It neared as if the Devil was in it.

## XIV

The Devil *was* in it ; he had bought  
Peter for half-a-crown ; and when  
The storm which bore him vanished, nought  
That in the house that storm had caught  
Was ever seen again.

## XV

The gaping neighbors came next day ;  
They found all vanished from the shore ;  
The Bible, whence he used to pray,  
Half scorched under a hen-coop lay ;  
Smashed glass — and nothing more !

## PART THE SECOND

## THE DEVIL

## I

THE Devil, I safely can aver,  
Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor sting;  
Nor is he, as some sages swear,  
A spirit, neither here nor there,  
In nothing — yet in everything.

## II

He is — what we are ; for sometimes  
The Devil is a gentleman ;  
At others a bard bartering rhymes  
For sack ; a statesman spinning crimes ;  
A swindler, living as he can ;

## III

A thief, who cometh in the night,  
With whole boots and net pantaloons,  
Like some one whom it were not right  
To mention, — or the luckless wight,  
From whom he steals nine silver spoons.

## IV

But in this case he did appear  
Like a slop-merchant from Wapping,  
And with smug face and eye severe  
On every side did perk and peer  
Till he saw Peter dead or napping.

## V

He had on an upper Benjamin  
    (For he was of the driving schism)  
In the which he wrapped his skin  
From the storm he travelled in,  
    For fear of rheumatism.

## VI

He called the ghost out of the corse, —  
    It was exceedingly like Peter,  
Only its voice was hollow and hoarse ;  
It had a queerish look, of course ;  
    Its dress too was a little neater.

## VII

The Devil knew not his name and lot ;  
    Peter knew not that he was Bell ;  
Each had an upper stream of thought,  
Which made all seem as it was not,  
    Fitting itself to all things well.

## VIII

Peter thought he had parents dear,  
    Brothers, sisters, cousins, cronies,  
In the fens of Lincolnshire ;  
He perhaps had found them there  
    Had he gone and boldly shown his

## IX

Solemn phiz in his own village,  
    Where he thought oft when a boy  
He'd clomb the orchard walls to pillage

The produce of his neighbor's tillage,  
With marvellous pride and joy.

## X

And the Devil thought he had,  
'Mid the misery and confusion  
Of an unjust war, just made  
A fortune by the gainful trade  
Of giving soldiers rations bad —  
The world is full of strange delusion ;

## XI

That he had a mansion planned  
In a square like Grosvenor-square,  
That he was aping fashion, and  
That he now came to Westmoreland  
To see what was romantic there.

## XII

And all this, though quite ideal,  
Ready at a breath to vanish,  
Was a state not more unreal  
Than the peace he could not feel,  
Or the care he could not banish.

## XIII

After a little conversation,  
The Devil told Peter, if he chose,  
He'd bring him to the world of fashion  
By giving him a situation  
In his own service — and new clothes.

## XIV

And Peter bowed, quite pleased and proud,  
And after waiting some few days  
For a new livery — dirty yellow  
Turned up with black — the wretched fellow  
Was bowled to Hell in the Devil's chaise.

## PART THE THIRD

## HELL

## I

HELL is a city much like London —  
A populous and a smoky city ;  
There are all sorts of people undone,  
And there is little or no fun done ;  
Small justice shown, and still less pity.

## II

There is a Castles, and a Canning,  
A Cobbett, and a Castlereagh ;  
All sorts of caitiff corpses planning  
All sorts of cozening for trepanning  
Corpses less corrupt than they.

## III

There is a —, who has lost  
His wits, or sold them, none knows which ;  
He walks about a double ghost,  
And, though as thin as Fraud almost,  
Ever grows more grim and rich.



## IV

There is a Chancery Court ; a King ;  
A manufacturing mob ; a set  
Of thieves who by themselves are sent  
Similar thieves to represent ;  
An army ; and a public debt.

## V

Which last is a scheme of paper money,  
And means — being interpreted —  
“ Bees, keep your wax — give us the honey,  
And we will plant, while skies are sunny,  
Flowers, which in winter serve instead.”

## VI

There is great talk of revolution —  
And a great chance of despotism —  
German soldiers — camps — confusion —  
Tumults — lotteries — rage — delusion —  
Gin — suicide — and methodism ;

## VII

Taxes too, on wine and bread,  
And meat, and beer, and tea, and cheese,  
From which those patriots pure are fed,  
Who gorge before they reel to bed,  
The tenfold essence of all these.

## VIII

There are mincing women, mewing  
(Like cats, who *amant misère*)  
Of their own virtue, and pursuing

Their gentler sisters to that ruin  
Without which — what were chastity?

## IX

Lawyers — judges — old hobnobbers  
Are there — bailiffs — chancellors —  
Bishops — great and little robbers —  
Rhymesters — pamphleteers — stock-jobbers —  
Men of glory in the wars ;

## X

Things whose trade is, over ladies  
To lean, and flirt, and stare, and simper,  
Till all that is divine in woman  
Grows cruel, courteous, smooth, inhuman,  
Crucified 'twixt a smile and whimper ;

## XI

Thrusting, toiling, wailing, moiling,  
Frowning, preaching — such a riot !  
Each with never-ceasing labor,  
Whilst he thinks he cheats his neighbor,  
Cheating his own heart of quiet.

## XII

And all these meet at levees ;  
Dinners convivial and political ;  
Suppers of epic poets ; teas,  
Where small talk dies in agonies ;  
Breakfasts professional and critical ;

## XIII

Lunches and snacks so aldermanic  
That one would furnish forth ten dinners,

Where reigns a Cretan-tonguèd panic,  
Lest news Russ, Dutch, or Alemannic  
Should make some losers, and some winners ;

## XIV

At conversazioni — balls —  
Conventicles — and drawing-rooms —  
Courts of law — committees — calls  
Of a morning — clubs — book-stalls —  
Churches — masquerades — and tombs.

## XV

And this is Hell — and in this smother  
Are all damnable and damned ;  
Each one, damning, damns the other ;  
They are damned by one another,  
By none other are they damned.

## XVI

'Tis a lie to say, "God damns !" —  
Where was Heaven's Attorney-General  
When they first gave out such flams ?  
Let there be an end of shams ;  
They are mines of poisonous mineral.

## XVII

Statesmen damn themselves to be  
Cursed ; and lawyers damn their souls  
To the auction of a fee ;  
Churchmen damn themselves to see  
God's sweet love in burning coals.

## XVIII

The rich are damned, beyond all cure,  
To taunt, and starve, and trample on  
The weak and wretched ; and the poor  
Damn their broken hearts to endure  
Stripe on stripe, with groan on groan.

## XIX

Sometimes the poor are damned indeed  
To take, not means for being blessed,  
But Cobbett's snuff, revenge ; that weed  
From which the worms that it doth feed  
Squeeze less than they before possessed.

## XX

And some few, like we know who,  
Damned — but God alone knows why —  
To believe their minds are given  
To make this ugly Hell a Heaven ;  
In which faith they live and die.

## XXI

Thus, as in a town, plague-stricken,  
Each man, be he sound or no,  
Must indifferently sicken ;  
As when day begins to thicken,  
None knows a pigeon from a crow ;

## XXII

So good and bad, sane and mad,  
The oppressor and the oppressed ;  
Those who weep to see what others

Smile to inflict upon their brothers ;  
Lovers, haters, worst and best ;

## XXIII

All are damned — they breathe an air,  
Thick, infected, joy-dispelling ;  
Each pursues what seems most fair,  
Mining, like moles, through mind, and there  
Scoop palace-caverns vast, where Care  
In thronèd state is ever dwelling.

## PART THE FOURTH

## SIN

## I

Lo, Peter in Hell's Grosvenor-square,  
A footman in the Devil's service !  
And the misjudging world would swear  
That every man in service there  
To virtue would prefer vice.

## II

But Peter, though now damned, was not  
What Peter was before damnation.  
Men oftentimes prepare a lot  
Which, ere it finds them, is not what  
Suits with their genuine station.

## III

All things that Peter saw and felt  
Had a peculiar aspect to him ;

And when they came within the belt  
Of his own nature, seemed to melt,  
Like cloud to cloud, into him.

## IV

And so the outward world uniting  
To that within him, he became  
Considerably uninviting  
To those, who meditation slighting,  
Were moulded in a different frame.

## V

And he scorned them, and they scorned him ;  
And he scorned all they did ; and they  
Did all that men of their own trim  
Are wont to do to please their whim —  
Drinking, lying, swearing, play.

## VI

Such were his fellow-servants ; thus  
His virtue, like our own, was built  
Too much on that indignant fuss  
Hypocrite Pride stirs up in us  
To bully one another's guilt.

## VII

He had a mind which was somehow  
At once circumference and centre  
Of all he might or feel or know ;  
Nothing went ever out, although  
Something did ever enter.

## VIII.

He had as much imagination  
As a pint-pot ; — he never could  
Fancy another situation,  
From which to dart his contemplation,  
Than that wherein he stood.

## IX

Yet his was individual mind,  
And new-created all he saw  
In a new manner, and refined  
Those new creations, and combined  
Them, by a master-spirit's law.

## X

Thus — though unimaginative —  
An apprehension clear, intense,  
Of his mind's work, had made alive  
The things it wrought on ; I believe  
Wakening a sort of thought in sense.

## XI

But from the first 'twas Peter's drift  
To be a kind of moral eunuch ;  
He touched the hem of Nature's shift,  
Felt faint — and never dared uplift  
The closest, all-concealing tunic.

## XII

She laughed the while, with an arch smile,  
And kissed him with a sister's kiss,  
And said — “ My best Diogenes,

I love you well — but, if you please,  
Tempt not again my deepest bliss.

## XIII

“ ’Tis you are cold — for I, not coy,  
Yield love for love, frank, warm and true;  
And Burns, a Scottish peasant boy —  
His errors prove it — knew my joy  
More, learnèd friend, than you.

## XIV

“ *Bocca bacciata non perde ventura  
Anzi rinnuova come fa la luna : —*  
So thought Boccaccio, whose sweet words might  
cure a  
Male prude, like you, from what you now en-  
dure, a  
Low-tide in soul, like a stagnant laguna.”

## XV

Then Peter rubbed his eyes severe,  
And smoothed his spacious forehead down,  
With his broad palm ; ’twixt love and fear,  
He looked, as he no doubt felt, queer,  
And in his dream sate down.

## XVI

The Devil was no uncommon creature ;  
A leaden-witted thief — just huddled  
Out of the dross and scum of nature ;  
A toad-like lump of limb and feature,  
With mind, and heart, and fancy muddled.



## XVII

He was that heavy, dull, cold thing,  
The spirit of evil well may be ;  
A drone too base to have a sting ;  
Who gluts, and grimes his lazy wing,  
And calls lust luxury.

## XVIII

Now he was quite the kind of wight  
Round whom collect, at a fixed era,  
Venison, turtle, hock, and claret, —  
Good cheer — and those who come to share it —  
And best East Indian madeira!

## XIX

It was his fancy to invite  
Men of science, wit, and learning,  
Who came to lend each other light ;  
He proudly thought that his gold's might  
Had set those spirits burning.

## XX

And men of learning, science, wit,  
Considered him as you and I  
Think of some rotten tree, and sit  
Lounging and dining under it,  
Exposed to the wide sky.

## XXI

And all the while, with loose fat smile,  
The willing wretch sat winking there,  
Believing 'twas his power that made

That jovial scene — and that all paid  
Homage to his unnoticed chair ;

XXII

Though to be sure this place was Hell ;  
He was the Devil — and all they —  
What though the claret circled well,  
And wit, like ocean, rose and fell ? —  
Were damned eternally.

PART THE FIFTH

GRACE

I

AMONG the guests who often stayed  
Till the Devil's petits-soupers,  
A man there came, fair as a maid,  
And Peter noted what he said,  
Standing behind his master's chair.

II

He was a mighty poet — and  
A subtle-souled psychologist ;  
All things he seemed to understand,  
Of old or new — of sea or land —  
But his own mind — which was a mist.

III

This was a man who might have turned  
Hell into Heaven — and so in gladness  
A Heaven unto himself have earned ;  
But he in shadows undiscerned  
Trusted, — and damned himself to madness.

## IV

He spoke of poetry, and how  
“ Divine it was — a light — a love —  
A spirit which like wind doth blow  
As it listeth, to and fro ;  
A dew rained down from God above ;

## V

“ A power which comes and goes like dream,  
And which none can ever trace —  
Heaven’s light on earth — Truth’s brightest beam.”  
And when he ceased there lay the gleam  
Of those words upon his face.

## VI

Now Peter, when he heard such talk,  
Would, heedless of a broken pate,  
Stand like a man asleep, or balk  
Some wishing guest of knife or fork,  
Or drop and break his master’s plate.

## VII

At night he oft would start and wake  
Like a lover, and began  
In a wild measure songs to make  
On moor, and glen, and rocky lake,  
And on the heart of man, —

## VIII

And on the universal sky,  
And the wide earth’s bosom green,  
And the sweet, strange mystery

Of what beyond these things may lie,  
And yet remain unseen.

## IX

For in his thought he visited  
The spots in which, ere dead and damned,  
He his wayward life had led ;  
Yet knew not whence the thoughts were fed,  
Which thus his fancy crammed.

## X

And these obscure remembrances  
Stirred such harmony in Peter,  
That whensoever he should please,  
He could speak of rocks and trees  
In poetic metre.

## XI

For though it was without a sense  
Of memory, yet he remembered well  
Many a ditch and quick-set fence ;  
Of lakes he had intelligence ;  
He knew something of heath and fell.

## XII

He had also dim recollections  
Of pedlers tramping on their rounds ;  
Milk-pans and pails ; and odd collections  
Of saws and proverbs ; and reflections  
Old parsons make in burying-grounds.

## XIII

But Peter's verse was clear, and came  
Announcing from the frozen hearth

Of a cold age, that none might tame  
The soul of that diviner flame  
It augured to the Earth ;

## XIV

Like gentle rains, on the dry plains,  
Making that green which late was gray,  
Or like the sudden moon, that stains  
Some gloomy chamber's window panes  
With a broad light like day.

## XV

For language was in Peter's hand  
Like clay while he was yet a potter ;  
And he made songs for all the land,  
Sweet, both to feel and understand,  
As pipkins late to mountain cotter.

## XVI

And Mr. —, the bookseller,  
Gave twenty pounds for some ; — then scorn-  
ing  
A footman's yellow coat to wear,  
Peter, too proud of heart, I fear,  
Instantly gave the Devil warning.

## XVII

Whereat the Devil took offence,  
And swore in his soul a great oath then,  
“ That for his damned impertinence,  
He'd bring him to a proper sense  
Of what was due to gentlemen ! ”

## PART THE SIXTH

## DAMNATION

## I

“O THAT mine enemy had written  
A book!” — cried Job; a fearful curse,  
If to the Arab, as the Briton,  
’Twas galling to be critic-bitten;  
The Devil to Peter wished no worse.

## II

When Peter’s next new book found vent,  
The Devil to all the first Reviews  
A copy of it slyly sent,  
With five-pound note as compliment,  
And this short notice — “Pray abuse.”

## III

Then *seriatim*, month and quarter,  
Appeared such mad tirades. One said, —  
“Peter seduced Mrs. Foy’s daughter,  
Then drowned the mother in Ullswater  
The last thing as he went to bed.”

## IV

Another — “Let him shave his head!  
Where’s Dr. Willis? — Or is he joking?  
What does the rascal mean or hope,  
No longer imitating Pope,  
In that barbarian Shakespeare poking?”

## V

One more, "Is incest not enough,  
And must there be adultery too?  
Grace after meat? Miscreant and Liar!  
Thief! Blackguard! Scoundrel! Fool! Hell-fire  
Is twenty times too good for you.

## VI

"By that last book of yours we think  
You've double damned yourself to scorn;  
We warned you whilst yet on the brink  
You stood. From your black name will shrink  
The babe that is unborn."

## VII

All these Reviews the Devil made  
Up in a parcel, which he had  
Safely to Peter's house conveyed.  
For carriage, tenpence Peter paid —  
Untied them — read them — went half-mad.

## VIII

"What!" cried he, "this is my reward  
For nights of thought, and days of toil?  
Do poets, but to be abhorred  
By men of whom they never heard,  
Consume their spirits' oil?"

## IX

"What have I done to them? — and who  
Is Mrs. Foy? 'Tis very cruel

To speak of me and Betty so !  
 Adultery ! God defend me ! Oh !  
 I've half a mind to fight a duel.

X

“ Or,” cried he, a grave look collecting,  
 “ Is it my genius, like the moon,  
 Sets those who stand her face inspecting,  
 That face within their brain reflecting,  
 Like a crazed bell-chime, out of tune ? ”

XI

For Peter did not know the town,  
 But thought, as country readers do,  
 For half a guinea or a crown  
 He bought oblivion or renown  
 From God's own voice in a Review.

XII

All Peter did on this occasion  
 Was writing some sad stuff in prose.  
 It is a dangerous invasion  
 When poets criticise ; their station  
 Is to delight, not pose.

XIII

The Devil then sent to Leipsic fair,  
 For Born's translation of Kant's book ;  
 A world of words, tail foremost, where  
 Right, wrong, false, true, and foul, and fair  
 As in a lottery-wheel are shook ;

ix. 3 *Betty*, Shelley to Ollier, May 14, 1820 || *Emma*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.



## XIV

Five thousand crammed octavo pages  
Of German psychologies, — he  
Who his *furor verborum* assuages  
Thereon deserves just seven months' wages  
More than will e'er be due to me.

## XV

I looked on them nine several days,  
And then I saw that they were bad ;  
A friend, too, spoke in their dispraise, —  
He never read them ; with amaze  
I found Sir William Drummond had.

## XVI

When the book came, the Devil sent  
It to P. Verbovale, Esquire,  
With a brief note of compliment,  
By that night's Carlisle mail. It went,  
And set his soul on fire —

## XVII

Fire, which *ex luce præbens fumum*,  
Made him beyond the bottom see  
Of truth's clear well — when I and you, Ma'am,  
Go, as we shall do, *subter humum*,  
We may know more than he.

## XVIII

Now Peter ran to seed in soul  
Into a walking paradox ;

For he was neither part nor whole,  
Nor good, nor bad, nor knave nor fool, —  
Among the woods and rocks.

## XIX

Furious he rode, where late he ran,  
Lashing and spurring his tame hobby ;  
Turned to a formal puritan,  
A solemn and unsexual man, —  
He half believed *White Obi*.

## XX

This steed in vision he would ride,  
High trotting over nine-inch bridges,  
With Flibbertigibbet, imp of pride,  
Mocking and mowing by his side —  
A mad-brained goblin for a guide —  
Over cornfields, gates and hedges.

## XXI

After these ghastly rides, he came  
Home to his heart, and found from thence  
Much stolen of its accustomed flame ;  
His thoughts grew weak, drowsy, and lame  
Of their intelligence.

## XXII

To Peter's view, all seemed one hue ;  
He was no whig, he was no tory ;  
No Deist and no Christian he ;  
He got so subtle that to be  
Nothing was all his glory.

## XXIII

One single point in his belief  
From his organization sprung,  
The heart-enrooted faith, the chief  
Ear in his doctrines' blighted sheaf,  
That "happiness is wrong."

## XXIV

So thought Calvin and Dominic ;  
So think their fierce successors, who  
Even now would neither stint nor stick  
Our flesh from off our bones to pick,  
If they might "do their do."

## XXV

His morals thus were undermined ;  
The old Peter — the hard, old Potter  
Was born anew within his mind ;  
He grew dull, harsh, sly, unrefined,  
As when he tramped beside the Otter.

## XXVI

In the death hues of agony  
Lambently flashing from a fish,  
Now Peter felt amused to see  
Shades like a rainbow's rise and flee,  
Mixed with a certain hungry wish.

## XXVII

So in his Country's dying face  
He looked — and lovely as she lay,

Seeking in vain his last embrace,  
Wailing her own abandoned case,  
With hardened sneer he turned away ;

## XXVIII.

And coolly to his own soul said, —  
“Do you not think that we might make  
A poem on her when she’s dead ;  
Or, no — a thought is in my head —  
Her shroud for a new sheet I’ll take ;

## XXIX

“My wife wants one. Let who will bury  
This mangled corpse ! And I and you,  
My dearest Soul, will then make merry,  
As the Prince Regent did with Sherry, —  
Ay — and at last desert me too.”

## XXX

And so his soul would not be gay,  
But moaned within him ; like a fawn  
Moaning within a cave, it lay  
Wounded and wasting, day by day,  
Till all its life of life was gone.

## XXXI

As troubled skies stain waters clear,  
The storm in Peter’s heart and mind  
Now made his verses dark and queer ;  
They were the ghosts of what they were,  
Shaking dim grave clothes in the wind.

## XXXII

For he now raved enormous folly,  
Of Baptisms, Sunday-schools, and Graves ;  
'Twould make George Colman melancholy  
To have heard him, like a male Molly,  
Chanting those stupid staves.

## XXXIII

Yet the Reviews, who heaped abuse  
On Peter while he wrote for freedom,  
So soon as in his song they spy  
The folly which soothes tyranny,  
Praise him, for those who feed 'em.

## XXXIV

“ He was a man, too great to scan ;  
A planet lost in truth's keen rays ;  
His virtue, awful and prodigious ;  
He was the most sublime, religious,  
Pure-minded Poet of these days.”

## XXXV

As soon as he read that, cried Peter,  
“ Eureka ! I have found the way  
To make a better thing of metre  
Than e'er was made by living creature  
Up to this blessed day.”

## XXXVI

Then Peter wrote odes to the Devil,  
In one of which he meekly said :

“ May Carnage and Slaughter,  
Thy niece and thy daughter,  
May Rapine and Famine,  
Thy gorge ever cramming,  
Glut thee with living and dead !

XXXVII

“ May death and damnation,  
And consternation,  
Flit up from hell with pure intent !  
Slash them at Manchester,  
Glasgow, Leeds and Chester ;  
Drench all with blood from Avon to Trent.

XXXVIII

“ Let thy body-guard yeomen  
Hew down babes and women  
And laugh with bold triumph till Heaven be rent !  
When Moloch in Jewry  
Munched children with fury,  
It was thou, Devil, dining with pure intent.”

PART THE SEVENTH

DOUBLE DAMNATION

I

THE Devil now knew his proper cue.  
Soon as he read the ode, he drove  
To his friend Lord MacMurderhouse's,  
A man of interest in both houses,  
And said : — “ For money or for love,

## II

“ Pray find some cure or sinecure ;  
To feed from the superfluous taxes,  
A friend of ours — a poet ; fewer  
Have fluttered tamer to the lure  
Than he.” His lordship stands and racks his

## III

Stupid brains, while one might count  
As many beads as he had boroughs, —  
At length replies, from his mean front,  
Like one who rubs out an account,  
Smoothing away the unmeaning furrows :

## IV

“ It happens fortunately, dear Sir,  
I can. I hope I need require  
No pledge from you that he will stir  
In our affairs ; — like Oliver,  
That he’ll be worthy of his hire.”

## V

These words exchanged, the news sent off  
To Peter, home the Devil hied, —  
Took to his bed ; he had no cough,  
No doctor, — meat and drink enough, —  
Yet that same night he died.

## VI

The Devil’s corpse was leaded down ;  
His decent heirs enjoyed his pelf ;

Mourning-coaches, many a one,  
Followed his hearse along the town ; —  
Where was the Devil himself ?

## VII

When Peter heard of his promotion,  
His eyes grew like two stars for bliss ;  
There was a bow of sleek devotion,  
Engendering in his back ; each motion  
Seemed a Lord's shoe to kiss.

## VIII

He hired a house, bought plate, and made  
A genteel drive up to his door,  
With sifted gravel neatly laid,  
As if defying all who said,  
Peter was ever poor.

## IX

But a disease soon struck into  
The very life and soul of Peter ;  
He walked about — slept — had the hue  
Of health upon his cheeks — and few  
Dug better — none a heartier eater.

## X

And yet a strange and horrid curse  
Clung upon Peter, night and day ;  
Month after month the thing grew worse,  
And deadlier than in this my verse  
I can find strength to say.



## XI

Peter was dull — he was at first  
Dull — oh, so dull — so very dull !  
Whether he talked, wrote, or rehearsed —  
Still with this dulness was he cursed —  
Dull — beyond all conception — dull.

## XII

No one could read his books — no mortal,  
But a few natural friends, would hear him ;  
The parson came not near his portal ;  
His state was like that of the immortal  
Described by Swift — no man could bear him.

## XIII

His sister, wife, and children yawned,  
With a long, slow, and drear ennui,  
All human patience far beyond ;  
Their hopes of Heaven each would have pawned  
Anywhere else to be.

## XIV

But in his verse, and in his prose,  
The essence of his dulness was  
Concentred and compressed so close,  
'Twould have made Guatimozin doze  
On his red gridiron of brass.

## XV

A printer's boy, folding those pages,  
Fell slumbrously upon one side,  
Like those famed seven who slept three ages ;

To wakeful frenzy's vigil rages,  
As opiates, were the same applied.

## XVI

Even the Reviewers who were hired  
To do the work of his reviewing,  
With adamantine nerves, grew tired ;  
Gaping and torpid they retired  
To dream of what they should be doing.

## XVII

And worse and worse the drowsy curse  
Yawned in him, till it grew a pest —  
A wide contagious atmosphere  
Creeping like cold through all things near,  
A power to infect and to infest.

## XVIII

His servant-maids and dogs grew dull ;  
His kitten, late a sportive elf ;  
The woods and lakes, so beautiful,  
Of dim stupidity were full ;  
All grew dull as Peter's self.

## XIX

The earth under his feet — the springs  
Which lived within it a quick life,  
The air, the winds of many wings  
That fan it with new murmurings,  
Were dead to their harmonious strife.

## XX

The birds and beasts within the wood,  
The insects, and each creeping thing,

Were now a silent multitude ;  
Love's work was left unwrought — no brood  
Near Peter's house took wing.

## XXI

And every neighboring cottager  
Stupidly yawned upon the other ;  
No jackass brayed ; no little cur  
Cocked up his ears ; no man would stir  
To save a dying mother.

## XXII

Yet all from that charmed district went  
But some half-idiot and half-knave,  
Who rather than pay any rent  
Would live with marvellous content  
Over his father's grave.

## XXIII

No bailiff dared within that space,  
For fear of the dull charm, to enter ;  
A man would bear upon his face,  
For fifteen months in any case,  
The yawn of such a venture.

## XXIV

Seven miles above — below — around —  
This pest of dulness holds its sway ;  
A ghastly life without a sound ;  
To Peter's soul the spell is bound —  
How should it ever pass away ?

## **THE WITCH OF ATLAS**

*The Witch of Atlas* was published in Mrs. Shelley's edition of the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. The poem was conceived during a solitary walk from the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa, to the top of Monte San Pellegrino, August 12, 1820, and was written August 14, 15 and 16. It was sent to Ollier to be published with Shelley's name, but was not issued. The dedication, omitted in the edition of 1824, was published in the second edition of 1839. A MS., in Shelley's hand, in the possession of the Shelley family, from which Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, derived a few corrections, and a transcript in Mrs. Shelley's hand, in the possession of Mr. Townshend Mayer, of which the variations are given by Forman, slightly modify the text. The transcript plainly represents an earlier and inferior state of the poem than the copy followed by Mrs. Shelley in her edition.

## TO MARY

ON HER OBJECTING TO THE FOLLOWING POEM UPON THE  
SCORE OF ITS CONTAINING NO HUMAN INTEREST

### I

How, my dear Mary, are you critic-bitten  
    (For vipers kill, though dead) by some review,  
That you condemn these verses I have written,  
    Because they tell no story, false or true !  
What, though no mice are caught by a young  
    kitten,  
    May it not leap and play as grown cats do,  
Till its claws come ? Prithee, for this one time,  
Content thee with a visionary rhyme.

### II

What hand would crush the silken-wingèd fly,  
    The youngest of inconstant April's minions,  
Because it cannot climb the purest sky,  
    Where the swan sings, amid the sun's domin-  
    ions ?  
Not thine. Thou knowest 'tis its doom to die,  
    When day shall hide within her twilight pinions  
The lucent eyes, and the eternal smile,  
Serene as thine, which lent it life awhile.

### III

To thy fair feet a wingèd Vision came,  
    Whose date should have been longer than a day,

And o'er thy head did beat its wings for fame,  
And in thy sight its fading plumes display;  
The watery bow burned in the evening flame,  
But the shower fell, the swift sun went his  
way —  
And that is dead. Oh, let me not believe  
That anything of mine is fit to live!

## IV

Wordsworth informs us he was nineteen years  
Considering and retouching Peter Bell;  
Watering his laurels with the killing tears  
Of slow, dull care, so that their roots to hell  
Might pierce, and their wide branches blot the  
spheres  
Of heaven, with dewy leaves and flowers; this  
well  
May be, for Heaven and Earth conspire to foil  
The over-busy gardener's blundering toil.

## V

My Witch indeed is not so sweet a creature  
As Ruth or Lucy, whom his graceful praise  
Clothes for our grandsons — but she matches  
Peter,  
Though he took nineteen years, and she three  
days,  
In dressing. Light the vest of flowing metre  
She wears; he, proud as dandy with his stays,  
Has hung upon his wiry limbs a dress  
Like King Lear's "looped and windowed ragged-  
ness."

## VI

If you strip Peter, you will see a fellow  
Scorched by Hell's hyperequatorial climate  
Into a kind of a sulphureous yellow :

A lean mark, hardly fit to fling a rhyme at ;  
In shape a Scaramouch, in hue Othello.

If you unveil my Witch, no priest nor primate  
Can shrive you of that sin, — if sin there be  
In love, when it becomes idolatry.





## THE WITCH OF ATLAS

### I

BEFORE those cruel Twins, whom at one birth  
Incestuous Change bore to her father Time,  
Error and Truth, had hunted from the earth  
All those bright natures which adorned its  
prime,  
And left us nothing to believe in, worth  
The pains of putting into learned rhyme,  
A Lady-Witch there lived on Atlas' mountain  
Within a cavern by a secret fountain.

### II

Her mother was one of the Atlantides ;  
The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden  
In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas  
So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden  
In the warm shadow of her loveliness ;  
He kissed her with his beams, and made all  
golden  
The chamber of gray rock in which she lay ;  
She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

### III

'Tis said, she first was changed into a vapor,  
And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,

iii. 1 *first was*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || *was first*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

Like splendor-wingèd moths about a taper,  
 Round the red west when the sun dies in it;  
 And then into a meteor, such as caper  
 On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit;  
 Then, into one of those mysterious stars  
 Which hide themselves between the Earth and  
 Mars.

## IV

Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent  
 Her bow beside the folding-star, and bidden  
 With that bright sign the billows to indent  
 The sea-deserted sand — like children chidden,  
 At her command they ever came and went —  
 Since in that cave a dewy splendor hidden  
 Took shape and motion; with the living form  
 Of this embodied Power the cave grew warm.

## V

A lovely lady garmented in light  
 From her own beauty; deep her eyes as are  
 Two openings of unfathomable night  
 Seen through a temple's cloven roof; her hair  
 Dark; the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight,  
 Picturing her form; her soft smiles shone afar,  
 And her low voice was heard like love, and drew  
 All living things towards this wonder new.

## VI

And first the spotted camelopard came,  
 And then the wise and fearless elephant;

iii. 4 *red*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *dead*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

v. 4 *temple's*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || *tempest's*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame  
Of his own volumes intervolved. All gaunt  
And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame ;  
They drank before her at her sacred fount ;  
And every beast of beating heart grew bold,  
Such gentleness and power even to behold.

## VII

The brinded lioness led forth her young,  
That she might teach them how they should  
forego  
Their inborn thirst of death ; the pard unstrung  
His sinews at her feet, and sought to know,  
With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue,  
How he might be as gentle as the doe.  
The magic circle of her voice and eyes  
All savage natures did imparadise.

## VIII

And old Silenus, shaking a green stick  
Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew  
Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick  
Cicadæ are, drunk with the noonday dew ;  
And Dryope and Faunus followed quick,  
Teasing the god to sing them something new ;  
Till in this cave they found the Lady lone,  
Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

## IX

And universal Pan, 'tis said, was there ;  
And — though none saw him — through the  
adamant

vi. 8 *gentleness* . . . *even*, omit, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air  
 And through those living spirits, like a want,  
 He passed out of his everlasting lair  
 Where the quick heart of the great world doth  
     pant,  
 And felt that wondrous Lady all alone, —  
 And she felt him upon her emerald throne.

## X

And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,  
 And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,  
 Who drives her white waves over the green sea,  
 And Ocean, with the brine on his gray locks,  
 And quaint Priapus with his company,  
 All came, much wondering how the enwombèd  
     rocks  
 Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth ;  
 Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

## XI

The herdsman and the mountain maidens came,  
 And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant ;  
 Their spirits shook within them, as a flame  
     Stirred by the air under a cavern gaunt ;  
 Pygmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name,  
 Centaurs and Satyrs, and such shapes as haunt  
 Wet clefts, and lumps neither alive nor dead,  
 Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.

xi. 5-7 : —

Fauns, Centaurs, Pigmyes, and such wild game,  
 And monophthalmic Polyphemes, who haunt  
 The pine-hills, flocked.

Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

## XII

For she was beautiful ; her beauty made  
The bright world dim, and everything beside  
Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade ;  
No thought of living spirit could abide,  
Which to her looks had ever been betrayed,  
On any object in the world so wide,  
On any hope within the circling skies,  
But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

## XIII

Which when the Lady knew, she took her spindle  
And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and  
three  
Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle  
The clouds and waves and mountains with ; and  
she  
As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle  
In the belated moon, wound skilfully ;  
And with these threads a subtle veil she wove —  
A shadow for the splendor of her love.

## XIV

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling  
Were stored with magic treasures — sounds of air  
Which had the power all spirits of compelling,  
Folded in cells of crystal silence there ;  
Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling  
Will never die — yet ere we are aware,  
The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,  
And the regret they leave remains alone.

## XV

And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,  
 Each in its thin sheath like a chrysalis ;  
 Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint  
 With the soft burden of intensest bliss  
 It is its work to bear to many a saint  
 Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,  
 Even Love's ; and others white, green, gray, and  
 black,  
 And of all shapes — and each was at her beck.

## XVI

And odors in a kind of aviary  
 Of ever-blooming Eden-trees she kept,  
 Clipped in a floating net a love-sick Fairy  
 Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet  
 slept ;  
 As bats at the wired window of a dairy,  
 They beat their vans ; and each was an adept,  
 When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds,  
 To stir sweet thoughts or sad, in destined minds.

## XVII

And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might  
 Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep,  
 And change eternal death into a night  
 Of glorious dreams — or, if eyes needs must weep,  
 Could make their tears all wonder and delight —  
 She in her crystal vials did closely keep ;

xv. 5 *is its*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *was its*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript;  
*is their*, Rossetti, *was their*, Dowden.

xvi. 4 *had woven from*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *Wove out of*, Mrs.  
 Shelley, transcript.

If men could drink of those clear vials, 'tis said,  
The living were not envied of the dead.

## XVIII

Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device,  
The works of some Saturnian Archimage,  
Which taught the expiations at whose price  
Men from the gods might win that happy age  
Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice ;  
And which might quench the earth-consuming  
rage  
Of gold and blood, till men should live and move  
Harmonious as the sacred stars above ;

## XIX

And how all things that seem untamable,  
Not to be checked and not to be confined,  
Obey the spells of wisdom's wizard skill ;  
Time, earth and fire, the ocean and the wind,  
And all their shapes, and man's imperial will ;  
And other scrolls whose writings did unbind  
The inmost lore of Love — let the profane  
Tremble to ask what secrets they contain.

## XX

And wondrous works of substances unknown,  
To which the enchantment of her father's power  
Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone,  
Were heaped in the recesses of her bower ;

xvii. 8 *envious*, James Thompson conj.

xx. 1 *works*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *rocks*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

3 *Had changed*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *Transformed*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.



Carved lamps and chalices, and vials which shone  
In their own golden beams — each like a flower  
Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light  
Under a cypress in a starless night.

## XXI

At first she lived alone in this wild home,  
And her own thoughts were each a minister,  
Clothing themselves or with the ocean-foam,  
Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire,  
To work whatever purposes might come  
Into her mind ; such power her mighty Sire  
Had girt them with, whether to fly or run,  
Through all the regions which he shines upon.

## XXII

The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades,  
Oreads and Naiads with long weedy locks,  
Offered to do her bidding through the seas,  
Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks,  
And far beneath the matted roots of trees,  
And in the gnarled heart of stubborn oaks,  
So they might live forever in the light  
Of her sweet presence — each a satellite.

## XXIII

“ This may not be,” the Wizard Maid replied ;  
“ The fountains where the Naiades bedew  
Their shining hair, at length are drained and dried ;  
The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew  
Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide ;  
The boundless ocean, like a drop of dew,

xxii. 2 *weedy*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *streaming*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

Will be consumed — the stubborn centre must  
Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust ;

## XXIV

“ And ye with them will perish one by one.  
If I must sigh to think that this shall be,  
If I must weep when the surviving Sun  
Shall smile on your decay, oh, ask not me  
To love you till your little race is run ;  
I cannot die as ye must — over me  
Your leaves shall glance — the streams in which  
ye dwell  
Shall be my paths henceforth, and so — farewell ! ”

## XXV

She spoke and wept ; the dark and azure well  
Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright  
tears,  
And every little circlet where they fell  
Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres  
And intertangled lines of light ; a knell  
Of sobbing voices came upon her ears  
From those departing Forms, o'er the serene  
Of the white streams and of the forest green.

## XXVI

All day the Wizard Lady sate aloof,  
Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity,  
Under the cavern's fountain-lighted roof ;  
Or broidering the pictured poesy

xxiii. 7 *centre*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *mountains*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

xxiv. 2 *sigh*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *weep*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

Of some high tale upon her growing woof,  
Which the sweet splendor of her smiles could  
dye  
In hues outshining Heaven — and ever she  
Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

## XXVII

While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece  
Of sandal-wood, rare gums and cinnamon ;  
Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is ;  
Each flame of it is as a precious stone  
Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this  
Belongs to each and all who gaze upon ;  
The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand  
She held a woof that dimmed the burning brand.

## XXVIII

This Lady never slept, but lay in trance  
All night within the fountain, as in sleep.  
Its emerald crags glowed in her beauty's glance ;  
Through the green splendor of the water deep  
She saw the constellations reel and dance  
Like fire-flies, and withal did ever keep  
The tenor of her contemplations calm,  
With open eyes, closed feet, and folded palm.

## XIX

And when the whirlwinds and the clouds de-  
scended  
From the white pinnacles of that cold hill,

xxvii. 6 *upon*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 ||  
*thereon*, Rossetti.

xxix. 2 *that*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *the*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

She passed at dewfall to a space extended,  
Where, in a lawn of flowering asphodel  
Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended,  
There yawned an inextinguishable well  
Of crimson fire, full even to the brim,  
And overflowing all the margin trim ;

## XXX

Within the which she lay when the fierce war  
Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor  
In many a mimic moon and bearded star,  
O'er woods and lawns ; the serpent heard it flicker  
In sleep, and, dreaming still, he crept afar ;  
And when the windless snow descended thicker  
Than autumn leaves, she watched it as it came  
Melt on the surface of the level flame.

## XXXI

She had a boat which some say Vulcan wrought  
For Venus, as the chariot of her star ;  
But it was found too feeble to be fraught  
With all the ardors in that sphere which are,  
And so she sold it, and Apollo bought  
And gave it to this daughter ; from a car  
Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat  
Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

## XXXII

And others say, that, when but three hours old,  
The first-born Love out of his cradle leapt,  
And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold,  
And like a horticultural adept,

xxx. 8 *level*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *liquid*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

Stole a strange seed, and wrapped it up in mould,  
And sowed it in his mother's star, and kept  
Watering it all the summer with sweet dew,  
And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

## XXXIII

The plant grew strong and green ; the snowy flower  
Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began  
To turn the light and dew by inward power  
To its own substance ; woven tracery ran  
Of light firm texture, ribbed and branching, o'er  
The solid rind, like a leaf's veined fan,  
Of which Love scooped this boat, and with soft  
motion  
Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

## XXXIV

This boat she moored upon her fount, and lit  
A living spirit within all its frame,  
Breathing the soul of swiftness into it.  
Couched on the fountain, like a panther tame —  
One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit —  
Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame,  
Or on blind Homer's heart a wingèd thought, —  
In joyous expectation lay the boat.

## XXXV

Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow  
Together, tempering the repugnant mass  
With liquid love — all things together grow  
Through which the harmony of love can pass ;  
And a fair Shape out of her hands did flow,  
A living Image, which did far surpass

In beauty that bright shape of vital stone  
Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

## XXXVI

A sexless thing it was, and in its growth  
It seemed to have developed no defect  
Of either sex, yet all the grace of both ;  
In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked ;  
The bosom lightly swelled with its full youth,  
The countenance was such as might select  
Some artist that his skill should never die,  
Imaging forth such perfect purity.

## XXXVII

From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings,  
Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere,  
Tipped with the speed of liquid lightnings,  
Dyed in the ardors of the atmosphere.  
She led her creature to the boiling springs  
Where the light boat was moored, and said,  
" Sit here ! "  
And pointed to the prow and took her seat  
Beside the rudder with opposing feet.

## XXXVIII

And down the streams which clove those mountains  
vast,  
Around their inland islets, and amid  
The panther-peopled forests, whose shade cast  
Darkness and odors, and a pleasure hid

xxxvi. 5 *lightly swelled*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup> || *swelled lightly*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 ; *swelling lightly with its full growth*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

xxxviii. 1 *the*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *those*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

In melancholy gloom, the pinnace passed ;  
 By many a star-surrounded pyramid  
 Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky,  
 And caverns yawning round unfathomably.

## XXXIX

The silver noon into that winding dell,  
 With slanted gleam athwart the forest tops,  
 Tempered like golden evening, feebly fell ;  
 A green and glowing light, like that which  
     drops  
 From folded lilies in which glow-worms dwell,  
 When earth over her face night's mantle wraps ;  
 Between the severed mountains lay on high,  
 Over the stream, a narrow rift of sky.

## XL

And ever as she went, the Image lay  
 With folded wings and unawakened eyes ;  
 And o'er its gentle countenance did play  
 The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,  
 Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay,  
 And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet sighs  
 Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain,  
 They had aroused from that full heart and brain.

## XLI

And ever down the prone vale, like a cloud  
 Upon a stream of wind, the pinnace went ;

xxxix. 2 *athwart*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 ||  
*across*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript, cancelled.

xxxix. 6 *earth*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *night*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

xl. 8 *that*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *the*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

Now lingering on the pools, in which abode  
 The calm and darkness of the deep content  
 In which they paused ; now o'er the shallow road  
 Of white and dancing waters, all besprent  
 With sand and polished pebbles : mortal boat  
 In such a shallow rapid could not float.

## XLII

And down the earthquaking cataracts, which shiver  
 Their snow-like waters into golden air,  
 Or under chasms unfathomable ever  
 Sepulchre them, till in their rage they tear  
 A subterranean portal for the river,  
 It fled — the circling sunbows did upbear  
 Its fall down the hoar precipice of spray,  
 Lighting it far upon its lampless way.

## XLIII

And when the Wizard Lady would ascend  
 The labyrinths of some many-winding vale,  
 Which to the inmost mountain upward tend,  
 She called "Hermaphroditus !" and the pale  
 And heavy hue which slumber could extend  
 Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale  
 A rapid shadow from a slope of grass,  
 Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

## XLIV

And it unfurled its heaven-colored pinions,  
 With stars of fire spotting the stream below,

xli. 3 *on*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *in*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

6 *dancing*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *shallow*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

xlii. 6 *sunbows*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *sunbeams*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.



And from above into the Sun's dominions  
 Flinging a glory, like the golden glow  
 In which Spring clothes her emerald-wingèd  
     minions,  
 All interwoven with fine feathery snow  
 And moonlight splendor of intensest rime  
 With which frost paints the pines in winter time ;

## XLV

And then it winnowed the Elysian air,  
 Which ever hung about that lady bright,  
 With its ethereal vans ; and speeding there,  
     Like a star up the torrent of the night,  
 Or a swift eagle in the morning glare  
     Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight,  
 The pinnacle, oared by those enchanted wings,  
 Clove the fierce streams towards their upper  
     springs.

## XLVI

The water flashed, like sunlight by the prow  
 Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven ;  
 The still air seemed as if its waves did flow  
     In tempest down the mountains ; loosely driven  
 The lady's radiant hair streamed to and fro ;  
     Beneath, the billows, having vainly striven  
 Indignant and impetuous, roared to feel  
 The swift and steady motion of the keel.

## XLVII

Or, when the weary moon was in the wane,  
 Or in the noon of interlunar night,

xlvi. 6 *Breasting*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *Breathing*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

xlvi. 2 *Of* || *Or*, Rossetti conj.

The Lady-Witch in visions could not chain  
Her spirit ; but sailed forth under the light  
Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain .  
Its storm-outsPEEDING wings the Hermaphro-  
dite ;  
She to the Austral waters took her way,  
Beyond the fabulous Thamandocana,

## XLVIII

Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven,  
Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast  
shake,  
With the Antarctic constellations paven,  
Canopus and his crew, lay the Austral lake ;  
There she would build herself a windless haven  
Out of the clouds whose moving turrets make  
The bastions of the storm, when through the  
sky  
The spirits of the tempest thundered by ;

## XLIX

A haven, beneath whose translucent floor  
The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably,  
And around which the solid vapors hoar,  
Based on the level waters, to the sky  
Lifted their dreadful crags, and, like a shore  
Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly  
Hemmed in, with rifts and precipices gray  
And hanging crags, many a cove and bay.

xlvi. 6 *Its*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || *His*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

xlvi. 5 *There*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *When*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

## L

And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash  
Of the wind's scourge foamed like a wounded  
thing,  
And the incessant hail with stony clash  
Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing  
Of the roused cormorant in the lightning flash  
Looked like the wreck of some wind-wander-  
ing  
Fragment of inky thunder-smoke — this haven  
Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven ;

## LI

On which that Lady played her many pranks,  
Circling the image of a shooting star,  
Even as a tiger on Hydaspes' banks  
Outspeeds the antelopes which speediest are,  
In her light boat ; and many quips and cranks  
She played upon the water ; till the car  
Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan,  
To journey from the misty east began.

## LII

And then she called out of the hollow turrets  
Of those high clouds, white, golden and ver-  
million,  
The armies of her ministering spirits ;  
In mighty legions, million after million,  
They came, each troop emblazoning its merits  
On meteor flags ; and many a proud pavilion

1. 6 *wreck*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *fragment*, Mrs. Shelley, trans-  
script.

Of the intertexture of the atmosphere  
They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.

## LIII

They framed the imperial tent of their great  
Queen

Of woven exhalations, underlaid  
With lambent lightning-fire, as may be seen  
A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid  
With crimson silk ; cressets from the serene  
Hung there, and on the water for her tread  
A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn,  
Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

## LIV

And on a throne o'erlaid with starlight, caught  
Upon those wandering isles of aëry dew  
Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not,  
She sate, and heard all that had happened new  
Between the earth and moon since they had  
brought

The last intelligence ; and now she grew  
Pale as that moon lost in the watery night,  
And now she wept, and now she laughed outright.

## LV

These were tame pleasures. She would often climb  
The steepest ladder of the crudded rack  
Up to some beakèd cape of cloud sublime,  
And like Arion on the dolphin's back

lii. 8 *mere*, omit, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

liv. 3 *mountain*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *mountains*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

Ride singing through the shoreless air ; oft-time  
Following the serpent lightning's winding track,  
She ran upon the platforms of the wind,  
And laughed to hear the fire-balls roar behind.

## LVI

And sometimes to those streams of upper air,  
Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round,  
She would ascend, and win the spirits there  
To let her join their chorus. Mortals found  
That on those days the sky was calm and fair,  
And mystic snatches of harmonious sound  
Wandered upon the earth where'er she passed,  
And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

## LVII

But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep,  
To glide adown old Nilus, where he threads  
Egypt and Æthiopia, from the steep  
Of utmost Axumé, until he spreads,  
Like a calm flock of silver-fleeced sheep,  
His waters on the plain, — and crested heads  
Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,  
And many a vapor-belted pyramid ;

## LVIII

By Mœris and the Mareotid lakes,  
Strewn with faint blooms, like bridal-chamber  
floors,  
Where naked boys bridling tame water-snakes,  
Or charioteering ghastly alligators,

lv. 8 *roar*, Mrs Shelley, 1824 || *roll*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

lvii. 2 *Where*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || *When*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes  
Of those huge forms — within the brazen doors  
Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast  
Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast ;

## LIX

And where within the surface of the river  
The shadows of the massy temples lie,  
And never are erased — but tremble ever  
Like things which every cloud can doom to die ;  
Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever  
The works of man pierced that serenest sky  
With tombs, and towers, and fanes, — 'twas her  
delight  
To wander in the shadow of the night.

## LX

With motion like the spirit of that wind  
Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet  
Passed through the peopled haunts of humankind,  
Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet ;  
Through fane and palace-court and labyrinth mined  
With many a dark and subterranean street  
Under the Nile, through chambers high and deep  
She passed, observing mortals in their sleep.

## LXI

A pleasure sweet doubtless it was to see  
Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep.  
Here lay two sister-twins in infancy ;  
There a lone youth who in his dreams did weep ;

*lix.* 7 *fanés*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *fane*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>1</sup>.  
*With tower-crested cities 'twas*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

Within, two lovers linkèd innocently

In their loose locks which over both did creep  
Like ivy from one stem ; and there lay calm  
Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.

## LXII

But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,

Not to be mirrored in a holy song ;  
Distortions foul of supernatural awe,

And pale imaginings of visioned wrong,  
And all the code of custom's lawless law

Written upon the brows of old and young ;  
" This," said the Wizard Maiden, " is the strife  
Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life."

## LXIII

And little did the sight disturb her soul.

We, the weak mariners of that wide lake,  
Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,

Our course unpiloted and starless make  
O'er its wild surface to an unknown goal ;

But she in the calm depths her way could  
take

Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide,  
Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

## LXIV

And she saw princes couched under the glow

Of sun-like gems ; and round each temple-court

Ixii. 6 *brows*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *brow*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

Ixiii. 3 *Where'er*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *Wherein*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

Ixiii. 5 *wild*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *wide*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript, 1839<sup>1</sup>.

In dormitories ranged, row after row,  
She saw the priests asleep, all of one sort,  
For all were educated to be so.  
The peasants in their huts, and in the port  
The sailors she saw cradled on the waves,  
And the dead lulled within their dreamless graves.

## LXV

And all the forms in which those spirits lay  
Were to her sight like the diaphanous  
Veils in which those sweet ladies oft array  
Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us  
Only their scorn of all concealment; they  
Move in the light of their own beauty thus.  
But these and all now lay with sleep upon them,  
And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

## LXVI

She all those human figures breathing there  
Beheld as living spirits; to her eyes  
The naked beauty of the soul lay bare;  
And often through a rude and worn disguise  
She saw the inner form most bright and fair;  
And then she had a charm of strange device,  
Which, murmured on mute lips with tender tone,  
Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

## LXVII

Alas, Aurora! what wouldst thou have given  
For such a charm, when Tithon became gray?  
Or how much, Venus, of thy silver Heaven  
Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina  
Had half (oh! why not all?) the debt forgiven  
Which dear Adonis had been doomed to pay,



To any witch who would have taught you it?  
The Heliad doth not know its value yet.

## LXVIII

'Tis said in after times her spirit free  
Knew what love was, and felt itself alone ;  
But holy Dian could not chaster be  
Before she stooped to kiss Endymion,  
Than now this lady — like a sexless bee  
Tasting all blossoms and confined to none ;  
Among those mortal forms the Wizard-Maiden  
Passed with an eye serene and heart unladen.

## LXIX

To those she saw most beautiful, she gave  
Strange panacea in a crystal bowl ;  
They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet  
wave,  
And lived thenceforward as if some control,  
Mightier than life, were in them ; and the grave  
Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul,  
Was as a green and over-arching bower  
Lit by the gems of many a starry flower.

## LXX

For on the night when they were buried, she  
Restored the embalmers' ruining and shook

*lxix.* 4 *thenceforward*, Boscombe MS. || *henceforward*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript ; *thenceforth*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

*lxix.* 5 *grave*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *grant*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

*lxix.* 7 *as*, Boscombe MS. || *omit*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

*lxx.* 1 *when*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || *that*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

The light out of the funeral lamps, to be  
 A mimic day within that deathly nook ;  
 And she unwound the woven imagery  
 Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and  
 took  
 The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche,  
 And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

## LXXI

And there the body lay, age after age,  
 Mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecay-  
 ing,  
 Like one asleep in a green hermitage,  
 With gentle smiles about its eyelids playing,  
 And living in its dreams beyond the rage  
 Of death or life, while they were still arraying  
 In liveries ever new the rapid, blind,  
 And fleeting generations of mankind.

## LXXII

And she would write strange dreams upon the  
 brain  
 Of those who were less beautiful, and make  
 All harsh and crooked purposes more vain  
 Than in the desert is the serpent's wake

lxx. 3 *lamps*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *lamp*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.  
 4 *deathly*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *deathly*, Mrs. Shelley, tran-  
 script.

lxxi. 1 *there the body*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *then bodies*, Mrs. Shel-  
 ley, transcript.

lxxi. 4 *smiles*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || *sleep*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

lxxii. 2 *less*, omit, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

4 *desert*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *deserts*, Mrs. Shelley, tran-  
 script.

Which the sand covers ; all his evil gain

The miser in such dreams would rise and shake  
 Into a beggar's lap ; the lying scribe  
 Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

## LXXIII

The priests would write an explanation full,

Translating hieroglyphics into Greek,  
 How the god Apis really was a bull,

And nothing more ; and bid the herald stick  
 The same against the temple doors, and pull

The old cant down ; they licensed all to speak  
 Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats, and  
 geese,

By pastoral letters to each diocese.

## LXXIV

The king would dress an ape up in his crown

And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat,  
 And on the right hand of the sun-like throne

Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat  
 The chatterings of the monkey. Every one

Of the prone courtiers crawled to kiss the feet  
 Of their great emperor when the morning came,  
 And kissed — alas, how many kiss the same !

## LXXV

The soldiers dreamed that they were blacksmiths,  
 and

Walked out of quarters in somnambulism ;

lxxiii. 4 *bid the herald*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *bade the heralds*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

lxxiii. 5 *doors*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *walls*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

Round the red anvils you might see them stand,  
Like Cyclopes in Vulcan's sooty abysm,  
Beating their swords to ploughshares ; in a band  
The gaolers sent those of the liberal schism  
Free through the streets of Memphis,— much, I wis,  
To the annoyance of king Amasis.

## LXXVI

And timid lovers who had been so coy  
They hardly knew whether they loved or not,  
Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy,  
To the fulfilment of their inmost thought ;  
And when next day the maiden and the boy  
Met one another, both, like sinners caught,  
Blushed at the thing which each believed was  
done  
Only in fancy — till the tenth moon shone ;

## LXXVII

And then the Witch would let them take no ill ;  
Of many thousand schemes which lovers find  
The Witch found one,—and so they took their  
fill  
Of happiness in marriage warm and kind.  
Friends who, by practice of some envious skill,  
Were torn apart — a wide wound, mind from  
mind —  
She did unite again with visions clear  
Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

lxxv. 3 *Round the red*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *Around the red hot*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

lxxvi. 4 *inmost*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *utmost*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.

## LXXVIII

These were the pranks she played among the cities

Of mortal men, and what she did to sprites  
And Gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties

To do her will, and show their subtle slights,  
I will declare another time ; for it is

A tale more fit for the weird winter nights  
Than for these garish summer days, when we  
Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

## NOTES



## NOTES

### ROSALIND AND HELEN

Rosalind and Helen, / a Modern Eclogue ; / with / Other Poems : / by / Percy Bysshe Shelley. / London : / Printed for C. and J. Ollier, / Vere Street, Bond Street. / 1819.

Collation : Octavo. Half-title (with advertisements of Shelley's other published poems, and imprint C. H. Reynell, Broadstreet, / Golden Square, London, (on verso), pp. i. ii. ; Title (with blank verso), pp. iii. iv. ; Advertisement, pp. v. vi. ; Contents (with blank verso), pp. vii. viii. ; Fly-title to *Rosalind and Helen / A / Modern Eclogue /* (with blank verso), pp. 1, 2 ; *Rosalind and Helen*, pp. 3-68 ; *Lines written on the Euganean Hills, Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, Sonnet-Ozymandias*, pp. 69-92. Four pages of advertisements. Issued in drab wrappers with white printed label lettered lengthwise *Rosalind and Helen*. A fragment of the poem is among the Boscombe MSS.

NOTES showing the state of other editions and including minor variations beyond what has been already noted.

63 *thee* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.

238 *Sat* 1819, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>, Rossetti, Dowden.

405 *which* The emendations are merely plausible. The sentence is a broken one, but within its limits it gives no satisfactory meaning unless it be that there was the thought of death at childbirth, which seems a strained interpretation.

449 *In vain*, — Rossetti.

551 *When* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>, Rossetti, Forman, Dowden. The emendation is necessary for the sense.

590 *nursing* Forman conj.

857 *sent*, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>, Dowden.

894-901 Compare the slightly different version of these lines in the poem *To William Shelley*, 1818.



- 932 *when* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>, Rossetti, Dowden. Forman's emendation seems reasonable.
- 1095 *bright* — Rossetti.
- 1173 *looks* 1839<sup>2</sup>, Rossetti.
- 1209 *rescue* Forman conj., Dowden. The emendation does not help the couplet to express its meaning, which plainly is that she survived several years either being insane without recollection of the loss of Lionel, or without memory of her experience during her illness. The meaning at all events is not that animal life was rescued from sorrow, but that by sinking into a merely animate state of life she was respite from grief.
- 1230 *bereft*, 1819, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.
- 1231 *dele comma* 1819, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.
- 1240 *wood* Dowden. The emendation is really a correction.
- 1246 *steep omit*, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.

#### CONTEMPORARY RECORDS : —

Mrs. Shelley's note (1839<sup>1</sup>, iii. 159, 160) : "*Rosalind and Helen* was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside, till I found it ; and, at my request, it was completed. Shelley had no care for any of his poems that did not emanate from the depths of his mind, and develop some high or abstruse truth. When he does touch on human life and the human heart, no pictures can be more faithful, more delicate, more subtle, or more pathetic. He never mentioned Love, but he shed a grace, borrowed from his own nature, that scarcely any other poet has bestowed on that passion. When he spoke of it as the law of life, which inasmuch as we rebel against, we err and injure ourselves and others, he promulgated that which he considered an irrefragable truth. In his eyes it was the essence of our being, and all woe and pain arose from the war made against it by selfishness, or insensibility, or mistake. By reverting in his mind to this first principle, he discovered the source of many emotions, and could disclose the secrets of all hearts, and his delineations of passion and emotion touch the finest chords in our nature. *Rosalind and Helen* was finished during the summer of 1818, while we were at the Baths of Lucca."

Shelley (from Bagni di Lucca) to Peacock, August 16, 1818: "I have finished, by taking advantage of a few days of inspiration — which the *Camæna* have been lately very backward in conceding — the little poem I began sending to the press in London. Ollier will send you the proofs. Its structure is slight and æry; its subject ideal. The metre corresponds with the spirit of the poem, and varies with the flow of the feeling." Peacock, *Works*, iii. 453.

Shelley (from Rome) to Peacock, April 6, 1819: "As to the poem now printing, I lay no stress on it one way or the other. The concluding lines are natural." Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 213.

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Hunt, August 15, 1819: "Your kind expressions about my Eclogue gave me great pleasure; indeed, my great stimulus in writing is to have the approbation of those who feel kindly towards me. The rest is mere duty." Hunt, *Lord Byron*, etc., i. 388.

Shelley (from Leghorn), to Ollier, September 6, 1819: "In the *Rosalind and Helen* I see there are some few errors, which are so much the worse because they are errors in the sense. If there should be any danger of a second edition, I will correct them." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 119.

*Rosalind and Helen* seems to have been suggested, in part, by the relation of Mrs. Shelley with a friend of her girlhood, Isabel Baxter, who fell away from her early attachment in consequence of Mrs. Shelley's flight with Shelley in July, 1814, and was afterward reconciled with her. (Dowden, *Life*, ii. 130, 131.) Forman (Type Facsimile of the original edition, Shelley Society's Publications, Second Series, No. 17, Introduction) discusses the matter at length, together with the reflection of political events in England possibly to be detected in the poem. It was noticed in *Blackwood's*, June, 1819.

#### JULIAN AND MADDALO

*Julian and Maddalo* is the first title in Mrs. Shelley's edition of the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. It is there dated May, 1819. In her first collected edition, 1839<sup>1</sup>, it appears among the *Poems of 1820*; but, in the second, 1839<sup>2</sup>, it is properly

placed among the *Poems of 1818*. It was written at Este in the late summer. The date, May, 1819, is the date of the MS. then completed, and represents the time when the poem had received its last revision. The MS. sent to Hunt, of which the variations are given from Forman in the footnotes to this edition, "is written on gilt-edged leaves apparently removed from a pocket-book, and measuring only  $3\frac{1}{8}$  inches by  $2\frac{3}{8}$ ." A specimen-leaf is facsimiled by Forman. Among the Boscombe MSS. is a fair draft in ink. The Harvard MS. volume shows by its index that pp. 1-30 were occupied by the same poem, there designated *Maddalo and Julian*; but these pages have been cut out. These are the sources of the text.

NOTES showing the state of other editions and including minor variations beyond what has been already noted. 1839<sup>1,2</sup> follows 1824 both in the footnotes and below where no variation is mentioned.

- 41 *vales* Miss Blind conj. The conjecture is a correction from Milton.  
 69 *a* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 99 *an* 1824, *a* 1838<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 124 *an* 1824, *a* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 126 *do*; 1824.  
 158 *passed* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 171 *Which* Rossetti, Dowden.  
 173 *of*, 1824, Rossetti, Dowden.  
 175 *minds* Rossetti.  
 179 *Utopian* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 191 *their* Rossetti, Forman, Dowden.  
 221 *The* Rossetti.  
 226 *on a sudden who* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 249 *nor* 1839.  
 266 *interrupted now* 1824.  
 282 *apart*, 1824.  
 284 *passion*: 1824.  
 310 *nor pain nor* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 356 *hath* Rossetti, Dowden.

- 414 *dies*: 1824.  
 474 *my* 1824, Rossetti, Dowden.  
 510 *my care* 1839<sup>2</sup>.  
 517 *was* 1839<sup>2</sup>.  
 579 *crowds or* Rossetti, Dowden.  
 648 *from the* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.

CONTEMPORARY RECORDS : —

Mrs. Shelley's Note (1839<sup>2</sup>, p. 229) : "I Capuccini was a villa built on the site of a Capuchin convent, demolished when the French suppressed religious houses ; it was situated on the very overhanging brow of a low hill at the foot of a range of higher ones. The house was cheerful and pleasant ; a vine-trellised walk, a *pergola*, as it is called in Italian, led from the hall door to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the *Prometheus* ; and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote *Julian and Maddalo* ; a slight ravine, with a road in its depth, divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ruins of the ancient castle of Este, whose dark massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sunk behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines, while to the east the horizon was lost in misty distance. After the picturesque but limited view of mountain, ravine, and chestnut wood at the Baths of Lucca, there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode."

Shelley (from Venice) to Mrs. Shelley, August 23, 1818 : "He [Byron] took me in his gondola across the laguna to a long sandy island, which defends Venice from the Adriatic. When we disembarked, we found his horses waiting for us, and we rode along the sands of the sea, talking. Our conversation consisted in histories of his wounded feelings, and questions as to my affairs, and great professions of friendship and regard for me. He said that if he had been in England at the time of the Chancery affair, he would have moved

heaven and earth to have prevented such a decision. We talked of literary matters, his Fourth Canto [Childe Harold], which he says is very good, and indeed he repeated some stanzas of great energy to me." Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 136.

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Leigh Hunt, August 15, 1819 : "I send you a little poem to give to Ollier for publication, but *without my name*. Peacock will correct the proofs. I wrote it with the idea of offering it to the *Examiner*, but I find it is too long. It was composed last year at Este ; two of the characters you will recognize ; and the third is also in some degree a painting from nature, but, with respect to time and place, ideal. You will find the little piece, I think, in some degree consistent with your own ideas of the manner in which poetry ought to be written. I have employed a certain familiar style of language to express the actual way in which people talk with each other, whom education and a certain refinement of sentiment have placed above the use of vulgar idioms. I use the word *vulgar* in its most extensive sense. The vulgarity of rank and fashion is as gross in its way as that of poverty, and its cant terms equally expressive of base conceptions, and, therefore, equally unfit for poetry. Not that the familiar style is to be admitted in the treatment of a subject wholly ideal, or in that part of any subject which relates to common life, where the passion, exceeding a certain limit, touches the boundaries of that which is ideal. Strong passion expresses itself in metaphor, borrowed from objects alike remote or near, and casts over all the shadow of its own greatness. But what am I about ? If my grandmother sucks eggs, was it I who taught her ?

"If *you* would really correct the proof, I need not trouble Peacock, who, I suppose, has enough. Can you take it as a compliment that I prefer to trouble you ?

I do not particularly wish this poem to be known as mine ; but, at all events, I would not put my name to it. I leave you to judge whether it is best to throw it into the fire, or to publish it. So much for self — *self*, that burr that will stick to one." Hunt, *Correspondence*, i. 137, 138.

Shelley (from Florence) to Ollier, December 15, 1819 : "Have you seen my poem *Julian and Maddalo*? Suppose you print that in the manner of Hunt's *Hero and Leander*; for I mean to write three other poems, the scenes of which will be laid at Rome, Florence and Naples, but the subjects of which will be all drawn from dreadful or beautiful realities, as that of this was." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 123.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, May 14, 1820 : "If I had even intended to publish *Julian and Maddalo* with my name, yet I would not print it with *Prometheus*. It would not harmonize. It is an attempt in a different style, in which I am not yet sure of myself — a *sermo pedestris* way of treating human nature, quite opposed to the idealisms of that drama. If you print *Julian and Maddalo*, I wish it to be printed in some unostentatious form, accompanied with the fragment of *Athanasia*, and exactly in the manner in which I sent it; and I particularly desire that my name be not annexed to the first edition of it in any case." *Shelley Memorials*, pp. 138, 139.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, November 10, 1820 : "I send some poems to be added to the pamphlet of *Julian and Maddalo*. [*Julian and Maddalo and Other Poems* had been announced as in press at the end of the sheet of Ollier's advertisements in *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820.] I think you have some other smaller poems belonging to that collection, and I believe you know that I do not wish my name to be printed on the title-page, though I have no objection to my being known as the author. . . . The *Julian and Maddalo* and the accompanying poems are all my saddest verses raked up into one heap. I mean to mingle more smiles with my tears in future." *Shelley Memorials*, pp. 139, 140.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Miss Clairmont, January 2, 1821 : "All your wishes have been attended to respecting *Julian and Maddalo*, which never was intended for publication." [Dowden suggests that Miss Clairmont objected to the publication on account of the mention of *Allegra*.] Dowden, ii. 385.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, February 22, 1821 : I suppose *Julian and Maddalo* is published. If not, do not add the *Witch of Atlas* to that peculiar piece of writing." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 154.

## PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

Prometheus Unbound / A Lyrical Drama / in Four Acts / with Other Poems / by / Percy Bysshe Shelley / Audisne haec, amphiaræ, sub terram abdite ? / London / C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street / 1820.

Collation : Octavo. Half-title (with advertisements of Shelley's published poems, and imprint, Marchant, Printer, Ingram-Court, Fenchurch-Street, London, on verso) pp. i. ii. ; Title (with blank verso) pp. iii. iv. ; Contents (with blank verso) pp. v. vi. ; Preface, pp. vii.-xv. ; Fly-title to *Prometheus Unbound* (with *Dramatis Personæ* on verso) pp. 17, 18 ; *Prometheus Unbound*, pp. 19-153 ; Fly-title to *Miscellaneous Poems* (with blank verso) pp. 155, 156 ; *The Sensitive Plant, A Vision of the Sea, Ode to Heaven, An Exhortation, Ode to the West Wind, An Ode, written October, 1819, before the Spaniards had recovered their Liberty, The Cloud, To a Skylark, Ode to Liberty*, pp. 157-222 ; advertisements of Ollier's publications, two pages, with imprint repeated at foot. Issued in boards, with white paper label on back, lettered Prometheus / Unbound / 9s.

An incomplete MS. is among the Boscombe MSS., and some corrections derived from it were published by Miss Blind in the *Westminster Review*, July, 1870.

NOTES showing the state of other editions and including minor variations beyond what has been already noted. 1839<sup>1</sup> incorporates Shelley's list of errata, and Mrs. Shelley may have added other corrections of her own ; the authority of Shelley for her text is, so far, open to doubt in any particular case.

- I. 73 *me. Speak ! Greenwood conj.*
- 137 *love, i. e. dost love* (Swinburne), but Forman construes, *I love*.
- 192 *dear Mrs. Shelley*, 1853.
- 414 *pain ?* all editions.
- 491 *agony.* “
- 526-531 Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Fury, Rossetti.

- I. 639 *woe-illumined* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>, Rossetti.  
 687 *those* 1820, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 712 *Between*. The meaning is between arch and sea.  
 774 *silent* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.
- II. Scene *lonely* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 i. 122 *morn* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 153 *by*, all editions.  
 155 *fire*, "  
 165 *Amid* or *Among* Rossetti conj. *Around* meaning  
     *in the neighborhood of* is perfectly good Eng-  
     lish, and used by Shelley. See *Concordance*.  
 171 *Spirits* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 ii. 25 *noonday*, 1820, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 50 *destinied soft* 1820.  
 53 *streams* 1839<sup>2</sup>.  
 60 *hurrying as* 1820.  
 71 *the omit* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 87 *on* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 iv. 4 *sun*. Rossetti conj.  
 5 *Shapeless*, "  
 12 line missing, Rossetti and Swinburne conj. The  
     difficulty is caused by a rapid change of con-  
     struction, the sense being entirely clear.  
 100 *reigns* Forman.  
 v. 95 *and on* Forman, Dowden. The emendation cor-  
     rects a faultless line merely to make it agree  
     with stanzaic structure, and like all metrical  
     emendations in a poet so accustomed to irreg-  
     ular and original melody as Shelley, is open  
     to the gravest doubt.
- III. i. 13 *might* Forman.  
 20 *distant* 1820.  
 69 *then omit* 1820.  
 ii. 22 *many peopled* 1820, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
 70 *is omit* 1839<sup>2</sup>, Rossetti. The word is naturally  
     slurred in the metre, and the movement of the  
     line is not more roughened than was cus-  
     tomary with Shelley.  
 102 *unwitting* 1820.



III. iii. 126 *that* 1839<sup>2</sup>.

iv. 110 *pasturing on* Forman's conjecture is unnecessary, the phrase being a recognized poetic idiom.

121 *light* 1820.

172 *conquerors ; mouldering round* Rossetti's emendation is plausible, but the sense of the text is complete and plain. The emblems of Power and Faith stand in the new world unregarded and mouldering memorials of a dead past, just as the Egyptian monuments imaged to a later time than their own a vanished monarchy and religion ; the fact that these monuments survived the new race and last into our still later time is an unnecessary and subordinate incident inserted because it appealed to Shelley's imagination.

IV. 58 *have* 1820, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.

61 *a* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.

221 *Its feathers are as plumes* Rossetti conj. The conjecture is a metrical correction for the sake of a regularity that Shelley did not seek for, the line as it stands being more characteristic.

225 *string* 1820.

242 *and green* Forman, Dowden. Rossetti's emendation is again a metrical correction, for which there is no authority in Shelley's habitual versification. The vowels and pause of the first half line, lengthening its time, the redundant syllable at the end and the five strong stresses, certainly make together a full line, and its movement heightens the effect, both musically and rhetorically, while as read with the inserted *and* the line is toned down and tamed to the blank-verse monotone.

274 *spoke* 1820.

276 *lightenings* Rossetti.

282 *poured* 1820.

325-331 The draft of these lines is given on a page of the *Facsimile of the MS. of The Mask of Anarchy*,

much cancelled and too much confused to be properly rendered except by facsimile.

355 *the* omit 1820.

387 *light* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.

432 *infrozen* Rossetti.

483 *or chameleon* 1839<sup>2</sup>, Rossetti, Dowden.

493, 494 add to preceding speech, Rossetti. The emendation is, again, a correction by standards that Shelley did not observe. Compare the passage with the draft for it among the FRAGMENTS.

554 *is* omit 1839<sup>1</sup>.

559 *dead* Forman, Dowden.

575 *flatter* 1820.

#### CONTEMPORARY RECORDS : —

Mrs. Shelley's Note 1839<sup>1</sup>, ii. 129-140 : "On the 12th of March, 1818, Shelley quitted England, never to return. His principal motive was the hope that his health would be improved by a milder climate ; he suffered very much during the winter previous to his emigration, and this decided his vacillating purpose. In December, 1817, he had written from Marlow to a friend, saying [Shelley (from Marlow) to Godwin, December 7, 1817] : —

"My health has been materially worse. My feelings at intervals are of a deadly and torpid kind, or awakened to such a state of unnatural and keen excitement, that only to instance the organ of sight, I find the very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present themselves to me with microscopic distinctness. Towards evening I sink into a state of lethargy and inanimation, and often remain for hours on the sofa between sleep and waking, a prey to the most painful irritability of thought. Such, with little intermission, is my condition. The hours devoted to study are selected with vigilant caution from among these periods of endurance. It is not for this that I think of travelling to Italy, even if I knew that Italy would relieve me. But I have experienced a decisive pulmonary attack, and although at present it has passed away without any considerable vestige of its exist-

ence, yet this symptom sufficiently shows the true nature of my disease to be consumptive. It is to my advantage that this malady is in its nature slow, and, if one is sufficiently alive to its advances, is susceptible of cure from a warm climate. In the event of its assuming any decided shape, *it would be my duty to go to Italy without delay.* It is not mere health, but life, that I should seek, and that not for my own sake ; I feel I am capable of trampling on all such weakness — but for the sake of those to whom my life may be a source of happiness, utility, security, and honor — and to some of whom my death might be all that is the reverse.’

“In almost every respect his journey to Italy was advantageous. He left behind friends to whom he was attached, but cares of a thousand kinds, many springing from his lavish generosity, crowded round him in his native country : and, except the society of one or two friends, he had no compensation. The climate caused him to consume half his existence in helpless suffering. His dearest pleasure, the free enjoyment of the scenes of nature, was marred by the same circumstance.

“He went direct to Italy, avoiding even Paris, and did not make any pause till he arrived at Milan. The first aspect of Italy enchanted Shelley ; it seemed a garden of delight placed beneath a clearer and brighter heaven than any he had lived under before. He wrote long descriptive letters during the first year of his residence in Italy, which, as compositions, are the most beautiful in the world, and show how truly he appreciated and studied the wonders of nature and art in that divine land.

“The poetical spirit within him speedily revived with all the power and with more than all the beauty of his first attempts. He meditated three subjects as the groundwork for lyrical Dramas. One was the story of Tasso : of this a slight fragment of a song of Tasso remains. The other was one founded on the book of Job, which he never abandoned in idea, but of which no trace remains among his papers. The third was the *Prometheus Unbound*. The Greek tragedians were now his most familiar companions in his wanderings, and the sublime majesty of Æschylus filled him with wonder

and delight. The father of Greek tragedy does not possess the pathos of Sophocles, nor the variety and tenderness of Euripides ; the interest on which he founds his dramas is often elevated above human vicissitudes into the mighty passions and throes of gods and demigods — such fascinated the abstract imagination of Shelley.

“ We spent a month at Milan, visiting the Lake of Como during that interval. Thence we passed in succession to Pisa, Leghorn, the Baths of Lucca, Venice, Este, Rome, Naples, and back again to Rome, whither we returned early in March, 1819. During all this time Shelley meditated the subject of his drama, and wrote portions of it. Other poems were composed during this interval, and while at the Bagni di Lucca he translated Plato’s *Symposium*. But though he diversified his studies, his thoughts centred in the *Prometheus*. At last, when at Rome, during a bright and beautiful spring, he gave up his whole time to the composition. The spot selected for his study was, as he mentions in his preface, the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. These are little known to the ordinary visitor at Rome. He describes them in a letter, with that poetry, and delicacy, and truth of description, which render his narrated impressions of scenery of unequalled beauty and interest.

“ At first he completed the drama in three acts. It was not till several months after, when at Florence, that he conceived that a fourth act, a sort of hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecies with regard to Prometheus, ought to be added to complete the composition. ✓

“ The prominent feature of Shelley’s theory of the destiny of the human species was, that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. ✓ This also forms a portion of Christianity ; God made earth and man perfect, till he, by his fall,

“ ‘ Brought death into the world and all our woe.’

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he

entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on, was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all, even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity ; a victim full of fortitude and hope, and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of good. Such he had depicted in his last poem, when he made Laon the enemy and the victim of tyrants. He now took a more idealized image of the same subject. He followed certain classical authorities in figuring Saturn as the good principle, Jupiter the usurping evil one, and Prometheus as the regenerator, who, unable to bring mankind back to primitive innocence, used knowledge as a weapon to defeat evil, by leading mankind beyond the state wherein they are sinless through ignorance, to that in which they are virtuous through wisdom. Jupiter punished the temerity of the Titan by chaining him to a rock of Caucasus, and causing a vulture to devour his still-renewed heart. There was a prophecy afloat in heaven portending the fall of Jove, the secret of averting which was known only to Prometheus, and the god offered freedom from torture on condition of its being communicated to him. According to the mythological story, this referred to the offspring of Thetis, who was destined to be greater than his father. Prometheus at last bought pardon for his crime of enriching mankind with his gifts, by revealing the prophecy. Hercules killed the vulture and set him free, and Thetis was married to Peleus the father of Achilles.

“Shelley adapted the catastrophe of this story to his peculiar views. The son, greater than his father, born of the nuptials of Jupiter and Thetis, was to dethrone Evil, and bring back a happier reign than that of Saturn. Prometheus defies the power of his enemy, and endures centuries of torture, till the hour arrives when Jove, blind to the real event, but darkly guessing that some great good to himself will flow, espouses Thetis. At the moment, the Primal Power of

the world drives him from his usurped throne, and Strength, in the person of Hercules, liberates Humanity, typified in Prometheus, from the tortures generated by evil done or suffered. Asia, one of the Oceanides, is the wife of Prometheus — she was, according to other mythological interpretations, the same as Venus and Nature. When the Benefactor of Mankind is liberated, Nature resumes the beauty of her prime, and is united to her husband, the emblem of the human race, in perfect and happy union. In the Fourth Act, the poet gives further scope to his imagination, and idealizes the forms of creation, such as we know them, instead of such as they appeared to the Greeks. Maternal Earth, the mighty Parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth — the guide of our planet through the realms of sky — while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere.

“Shelley develops, more particularly in the lyrics of this drama, his abstruse and imaginative theories with regard to the Creation. It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem. They elude the ordinary reader by their abstraction and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague. It was his design to write prose metaphysical essays on the nature of Man, which would have served to explain much of what is obscure in his poetry ; a few scattered fragments of observations and remarks alone remain. He considered these philosophical views of mind and nature to be instinct with the intensest spirit of poetry.

“More popular poets clothe the ideal with familiar and sensible imagery. Shelley loved to idealize the real — to gift the mechanism of the material universe with a soul and a voice, and to bestow such also on the most delicate and abstract emotions and thoughts of the mind. Sophocles was his great master in this species of imagery.

“I find in one of his manuscript books some remarks on a line in the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, which shows at once the critical subtlety of Shelley’s mind, and explains his apprehension of those ‘minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether

relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us,' which he pronounces, in the letter quoted in the note to *The Revolt of Islam*, to comprehend all that is sublime in man.

"In the Greek Shakespeare, Sophocles, we find the image, —

Πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις :

a line of almost unfathomable depth of poetry, yet how simple are the images in which it is arrayed : —

"Coming to many ways in the wanderings of careful thought.'

If the words ὁδοὺς and πλάνοις had not been used, the line might have been explained in a metaphorical, instead of an absolute sense, as we say "ways and means," and wanderings, for error and confusion ; but they meant literally paths or roads, such as we tread with our feet ; and wanderings, such as a man makes when he loses himself in a desert, or roams from city to city, as Œdipus, the speaker of this verse, was destined to wander, blind and asking charity. What a picture does this line suggest of the mind as a wilderness of intricate paths, wide as the universe, which is here made its symbol, a world within a world, which he who seeks some knowledge with respect to what he ought to do, searches throughout, as he would search the external universe for some valued thing which was hidden from him upon its surface.'

"In reading Shelley's poetry, we often find similar verses, resembling, but not imitating, the Greek in this species of imagery ; for though he adopted the style, he gifted it with that originality of form and coloring which sprung from his own genius.

"In the *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley fulfils the promise quoted from a letter in the Note on *The Revolt of Islam*. The tone of the composition is calmer and more majestic, the poetry more perfect as a whole, and the imagination displayed at once more pleasingly beautiful and more varied and daring. The description of the Hours, as they are seen in the cave of Demogorgon, is an instance of this — it fills the mind as the most charming picture — we long to see an artist at work to bring to our view the

“cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds,  
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands  
A wild-eyed charioteer, urging their flight.  
Some looked behind, as fiends pursued them there,  
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:  
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink  
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,  
As if the thing they loved fled on before,  
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright looks  
Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all  
Sweep onward.

“Through the whole Poem there reigns a sort of calm and holy spirit of love; it soothes the tortured, and is hope to the expectant, till the prophecy is fulfilled, and Love, untainted by any evil, becomes the law of the world. ✓

“England had been rendered a painful residence to Shelley, as much by the sort of persecution with which in those days all men of liberal opinions were visited, and by the injustice he had lately endured in the Court of Chancery, as by the symptoms of disease which made him regard a visit to Italy as necessary to prolong his life. An exile, and strongly impressed with the feeling that the majority of his countrymen regarded him with sentiments of aversion, such as his own heart could experience towards none, he sheltered himself from such disgusting and painful thoughts in the calm retreats of poetry, and built up a world of his own, with the more pleasure, since he hoped to induce some one or two to believe that the earth might become such, did mankind themselves consent. The charm of the Roman climate helped to clothe his thoughts in greater beauty than they had ever worn before; and as he wandered among the ruins, made one with nature in their decay, or gazed on the Praxitelean shapes that throng the Vatican, the Capitol, and the palaces of Rome, his soul imbibed forms of loveliness which became a portion of itself. There are many passages in the *Prometheus* which show the intense delight he received from such studies, and give back the impression with a beauty of poetical description peculiarly his own. He felt this, as a poet must feel when he satisfies himself by the result of his J



labors, and he wrote from Rome [Shelley to Peacock, April 6, 1819], 'My *Prometheus Unbound* is just finished, and in a month or two I shall send it. It is a drama, with characters and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted, and I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts.'

"I may mention, for the information of the more critical reader, that the verbal alterations in this edition of *Prometheus* are made from a list of errata, written by Shelley himself."

["*Prometheus* of Æschylus (Greek)" is the second title in the list of books read by Shelley, in 1816, as entered in Mrs. Shelley's Notebook.]

Mrs. Shelley's Journal, March 26, 1818, The Passage of Les Echelles (written by Shelley): "The rocks, which cannot be less than a thousand feet in perpendicular height, sometimes overhang the road on each side, and almost shut out the sky. The scene is like that described in the *Prometheus* of Æschylus. Vast rifts and caverns in the granite precipices, wintry mountains within and snow above; the loud sounds of unseen waters within the caverns, and walls of toppling rocks, only to be scaled, as he describes, by the winged chariots of the ocean nymphs." Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 111, 112.

Shelley (from Padua) to Mrs. Shelley (at Este), September 22, 1818: "Bring . . . the sheets of *Prometheus Unbound*, which you will find numbered from 1 to 26 on the table of the pavilion." Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 140.

Shelley (from Este) to Peacock, October 8, 1818: "I have been writing — and indeed have just finished the first Act of a lyric and classical drama, to be called *Prometheus Unbound*. Will you tell me what there is in Cicero about a drama supposed to have been written by Æschylus under this title?" Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 144.

Shelley (from Naples) to Peacock, January 26, 1819: "My first Act of *Prometheus* is complete, and I think you would like it." Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 183.

Shelley (from Rome) to Peacock, April 6, 1819. [See Mrs. Shelley's Note, above.]

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Peacock, July, 1819: "My

*Prometheus*, though ready, I do not send till I know more." Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 220.

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Ollier, September 6, 1819 : "My *Prometheus*, which has been long finished, is now being transcribed, and will soon be forwarded to you for publication. It is, in my judgment, of a higher character than anything I have yet attempted, and is perhaps less an imitation of anything that has gone before it. . . . The *Prometheus* you will be so good as to print as usual." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 118.

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Peacock, September 21, 1819 : "I have sent you my *Prometheus*, which I do not wish to be sent to Ollier for publication until I write to that effect. Mr. Gisborne will bring it." Peacock, *Works*, iii. 467.

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Hunt, September 27, 1819 : "I have sent my *Prometheus* to P. ; if you ask him for it, he will show it to you. I think it will please you." Hunt, *Correspondence*, i. 151.

Shelley (from Florence) to Ollier, October 15, 1819 : "The *Prometheus*, a poem in my best style, whatever that may amount to, will arrive with it [the Italian edition of *The Cenci*, 250 copies, in a box], but in MS., which you can print and publish in the season. It is the most perfect of my productions." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 121.

Shelley (from Florence) to Ollier, December 15, 1819 : "Let *Prometheus* be printed without delay. You will receive the additions, which Mrs. S[helley] is now transcribing, in a few days. It has already been read to many persons. My *Prometheus* is the best thing I ever wrote." *Shelley Memorials*, pp. 122, 123.

Shelley (from Florence) to Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, December 23, 1819 : "I have just finished an additional Act to *Prometheus*, which Mary is now transcribing, and which will be enclosed for your inspection before it is transmitted to the bookseller." Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 260, 261.

Mrs. Shelley (from Florence) to Mrs. Gisborne, December 28, 1819 : "I am glad you are pleased with the *Prometheus*. The last Act, though very beautiful, is certainly the most mystic of the four." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 129.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, March 6, 1820 : " I do not hear that you have received *Prometheus* and *The Cenci* ; I therefore think it safest to tell you how and when to get them, if you have not yet done so. Give the bill of lading Mr. Gisborne sent you to a broker in the city, whom you employ to get the package, and to pay the duty on the unbound books. The ship sailed in the middle of December, and will assuredly have arrived long before now. *Prometheus Unbound*, I must tell you, is my favorite poem ; I charge you, therefore, especially to pet him and feed him with fine ink and good paper. . . . I think if I can judge by its merits, the *Prometheus* cannot sell beyond twenty copies." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 137.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, March 13, 1820 : " I am anxious to hear that you have received the parcel from Leghorn, and to learn what you are doing with the *Prometheus*. If it can be done without great difficulty, I should be very glad that the revised sheets might be sent by the post to me at Leghorn. It might be divided into four partitions, sending me four or five sheets at once." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 137.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, May 14, 1820 : " As to the printing of the *Prometheus*, be it as you will. But, in this case, I shall repose or trust in your care respecting the correction of the press ; especially in the lyrical parts, where a minute error would be of much consequence. Mr. Gisborne will revise it ; he heard it recited, and will therefore more readily seize any error." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 138.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, May 26, 1820 : " I write to you thus early because I have determined to accept of your kind offer about the correction of *Prometheus*. The bookseller makes difficulties about sending the proofs to me, and to whom else can I so well entrust what I am so much interested in having done well ; and to whom would I prefer to owe the recollection of an additional kindness done to me ? I enclose you two little papers of corrections and additions. I do not think you will find any difficulty in interpolating them into their proper places." Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 227.

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Peacock, July 12, 1820 : " I

make bold to write to you on the news that you are correcting my *Prometheus*, for which I return thanks. . . . I enclose two additional poems [*Ode to Liberty* and one other poem unknown] to be added to those printed at the end." Peacock, *Works*, iii. 469.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Medwin, July 20, 1820 : "I . . . am encouraged to wish to present you with *Prometheus Unbound*, a drama also, but a composition of a totally different character [from *The Cenci*]. . . . *Prometheus Unbound* is in the merest spirit of ideal poetry, and not, as the name would indicate, a mere imitation of the Greek drama ; or, indeed, if I have been successful, is it an imitation of anything. But you will judge. I hear it is just printed." Trelawny, *Records*, ii. 37.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Keats, July 27, 1820 : "*Prometheus Unbound* I imagine you will receive nearly at the same time with this letter." *Westminster Review*, April, 1841.

Horace Smith to Shelley, September 4, 1820 : "I got from Ollier last week a copy of the *Prometheus Unbound*, which is certainly a most original, grand and occasionally sublime work, evincing, in my opinion, a higher order of talent than any of your previous productions ; and yet, contrary to your own estimation, I must say I prefer *The Cenci*, because it contains a deep and sustained human interest, of which we feel a want in the other. Prometheus himself certainly touches us nearly, but we see little of him after his liberation ; and, though I have no doubt it will be more admired than anything you have written, I question whether it will be so much read as *The Cenci*." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 145.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Peacock, November 15 [8 ?], 1820 : "Thank you for your kindness in correcting *Prometheus*, which I am afraid gave you a great deal of trouble." Peacock, *Works*, iii. 470.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, November 10, 1820 : Mr. Gisborne has sent me a copy of the *Prometheus*, which is certainly most beautifully printed. It is to be regretted that the errors of the press are so numerous, and in many respects so destructive of the sense of a species of poetry which, I fear, even without this disadvantage, very few will

understand or like. I shall send you the list of errata in a day or two." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 139.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, January 20, 1821 :—"I send you . . . and the errata of *Prometheus*, which I ought to have sent long since—a formidable list, as you will see." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 135.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, June 8, 1821 : "Such errors as assist the obscurity of the *Prometheus*." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 156.

Trelawny *Records* (I. xv. 118) : "Shelley said, 'If that is not durable poetry, tried by the severest test, I do not know what is. It is a lofty subject, not inadequately treated, and should not perish with me.' . . . 'My friends say my *Prometheus* is too wild, ideal, and perplexed with imagery. It may be so. It has no resemblance to the Greek drama. It is original; and cost me severe mental labor. Authors, like mothers, prefer the children who have given them most trouble."

*Prometheus Unbound* was noticed in the *London Literary Gazette*, September 9, 1820, and the *Quarterly*, December, 1821.

#### THE CENCI

The Cenci. / A Tragedy, / in Five Acts. / By Percy B. Shelley. / Italy. / Printed for C. and J. Ollier / Vere Street, Bond Street. / London. / 1819.

Collation: Octavo. Title (with blank verso), pp. i. ii.; Dedication, pp. iii.-v.; Preface, pp. vii.-xiv.; Fly-title to *The Cenci* (with *Dramatis Personæ* on verso), pp. 1, 2; *The Cenci*, pp. 3-104. Issued in boards, with white printed label lettered The / Cenci / 4s. 6d. bds.

The Cenci / A Tragedy / in Five Acts / By / Percy Bysshe Shelley / Second Edition / London / C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street / 1821.

Collation: Octavo. Title (with imprint, London / Printed by C. H. Reynell / Broad Street, Golden Square, on verso), pp. iii. iv.; Dedication, pp. v. vi.; Preface, pp. vii.-xvii.; Fly-title to *The Cenci* (with *Dramatis Personæ* on

verso), pp. 1, 2 ; *The Cenci*, pp. 3-103 ; imprint slightly different and with date 1821, p. 104. Issued in drab wrappers with white printed label on side lettered *The Cenci / A Tragedy / Second Edition / 4s. 6d.*

A list of Errata in the first edition, from the MS. of Mrs. Shelley, is published by Forman, *The Shelley Library*, 1886. The changes indicated were made in the second edition. No MS. is known.

NOTES showing the state of other editions including minor variations beyond what has been already noted.

- I. i. 13 *So* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>, Rossetti.  
     26 *me* omit, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
     100 *And but that there yet* Forman, Dowden. *But that there yet* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>, Rossetti.  
     131 *have* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
     140 *shall* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
     ii. 24 *yet* Rossetti.  
     iii. 132 *not* Rossetti.
- II. i. 113 *and* omit 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
     ii. 77 *the truth* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.
- III. i. 140 *or* 1839<sup>1</sup>.  
     ii. 17 *oil* 1819, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>, Forman, Dowden.  
     75 *to* omit 1819.  
     91 *Giacomo : May all be done* Rossetti.
- IV. iv. 6 *and wrathful* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.
- V. i. 58 *with your* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
     ii. 32 *dread* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
     165 *pain* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
     iii. 5 *Ah* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.  
     iv. 105 *yawns* 1819, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.

#### CONTEMPORARY RECORDS : —

Mrs. Shelley's Note, 1839<sup>1</sup>, ii. 272-276 : "The sort of mistake that Shelley made, as to the extent of his own genius and powers, which led him deviously at first, but lastly into the direct track that enabled him fully to develop them, is a curious instance of his modesty of feeling, and of the meth-

ods which the human mind uses at once to deceive itself, and yet, in its very delusion, to make its way out of error into the path which nature has marked out as its right one. He often incited me to attempt the writing a tragedy — he conceived that I possessed some dramatic talent, and he was always most earnest and energetic in his exhortations, that I should cultivate any talent I possessed to the utmost. I entertained a truer estimate of my powers ; and, above all, though at that time not exactly aware of the fact, I was far too young to have any chance of succeeding, even moderately, in a species of composition that requires a greater scope of experience in, and sympathy with, human passion than could then have fallen to my lot, or than any perhaps, except Shelley, ever possessed, even at the age of twenty-six, at which he wrote *The Cenci*.

“On the other hand, Shelley most erroneously conceived himself to be destitute of this talent. He believed that one of the first requisites was the capacity of forming and following up a story or plot. He fancied himself to be defective in this portion of imagination — it was that which gave him least pleasure in the writings of others — though he laid great store by it, as the proper framework to support the sublimest efforts of poetry. He asserted that he was too metaphysical and abstract — too fond of the theoretical and the ideal, to succeed as a tragedian. It perhaps is not strange that I shared this opinion with himself, for he had hitherto shown no inclination for, nor given any specimen of his powers in framing and supporting the interest of a story, either in prose or verse. Once or twice, when he attempted such, he had speedily thrown it aside, as being even disagreeable to him as an occupation.

“The subject he had suggested for a tragedy was Charles I., and he had written to me [Shelley (from Este) to Mrs. Shelley, September 22, 1818] : ‘Remember, remember Charles I. I have been already imagining how you would conduct some scenes. The second volume of *St. Leon* begins with this proud and true sentiment, “There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute.” Shakespeare was only a human being.’ These words were written in

1818, while we were in Lombardy, when he little thought how soon a work of his own would prove a proud comment on the passage he quoted. When in Rome, in 1819, a friend put into our hands the old manuscript account of the story of *The Cenci*. We visited the Colonna and Doria palaces, where the portraits of Beatrice were to be found ; and her beauty cast the reflection of its own grace over her appalling story. Shelley's imagination became strongly excited, and he urged the subject to me as one fitted for a tragedy. More than ever I felt my incompetence ; but I entreated him to write it instead ; and he began and proceeded swiftly, urged on by intense sympathy with the sufferings of the human beings whose passions, so long cold in the tomb, he revived, and gifted with poetic language. This tragedy is the only one of his works that he communicated to me during its progress. We talked over the arrangement of the scenes together. I speedily saw the great mistake we had made, and triumphed in the discovery of the new talent brought to light from that mine of wealth, never, alas ! through his untimely death, worked to its depths — his richly-gifted mind.

“ We suffered a severe affliction in Rome by the loss of our eldest child, who was of such beauty and promise as to cause him deservedly to be the idol of our hearts. We left the capital of the world, anxious for a time to escape a spot associated too intimately with his presence and loss. Some friends of ours were residing in the neighborhood of Leghorn, and we took a small house, Villa Valsovano, about half-way between the town and Monte Nero, where we remained during the summer. Our villa was situated in the midst of a *podere* ; the peasants sang as they worked beneath our windows, during the heats of a very hot season, and at night the water-wheel creaked as the process of irrigation went on, and the fireflies flashed from among the myrtle hedges : — nature was bright, sunshiny, and cheerful, or diversified by storms of a majestic terror, such as we had never before witnessed.

“ At the top of the house there was a sort of terrace. There is often such in Italy, generally roofed. This one was very small, yet not only roofed but glazed ; this Shelley made



his study ; it looked out on a wide prospect of fertile country, and commanded a view of the near sea. The storms that sometimes varied our day showed themselves most picturesquely as they were driven across the ocean ; sometimes the dark lurid clouds dipped towards the waves, and became water spouts, that churned up the waters beneath, as they were chased onward, and scattered by the tempest. At other times the dazzling sunlight and heat made it almost intolerable to every other ; but Shelley basked in both, and his health and spirits revived under their influence. In this airy cell he wrote the principal part of *The Cenci*. He was making a study of Calderon at the time, reading his best tragedies with an accomplished lady [Mrs. Gisborne] living near us, to whom his letter from Leghorn was addressed during the following year. He admired Calderon, both for his poetry and his dramatic genius ; but it shows his judgment and originality, that, though greatly struck by his first acquaintance with the Spanish poet, none of his peculiarities crept into the composition of *The Cenci* ; and there is no trace of his new studies, except in that passage to which he himself alludes, as suggested by one in *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*.

"Shelley wished *The Cenci* to be acted. He was not a play-goer, being of such fastidious taste that he was easily disgusted by the bad filling up of the inferior parts. While preparing for our departure from England, however, he saw Miss O'Neil several times ; she was then in the zenith of her glory, and Shelley was deeply moved by her impersonation of several parts, and by the graceful sweetness, the intense pathos, and sublime vehemence of passion she displayed. She was often in his thoughts as he wrote, and when he had finished, he became anxious that his tragedy should be acted, and receive the advantage of having this accomplished actress to fill the part of the heroine. With this view he wrote the following letter to a friend in London :—

"[Shelley (from Leghorn) to Peacock, July, 1819] : 'The object of the present letter is to ask a favor of you. I have written a tragedy on the subject of a story well known in

Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic. I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favorably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions ; I having attended simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development. I send you a translation of the Italian MS. on which my play is founded ; the chief subject of which I have touched very delicately ; for my principal doubt as to whether it would succeed, as an acting play, hangs entirely on the question, as to whether such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no objection, considering, first, that the facts are matter of history and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it.

“ I am exceedingly interested in the question of whether this attempt of mine will succeed or no. I am strongly inclined to the affirmative at present ; founding my hopes on this, that as a composition it is certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of *Remorse* ; that the interest of its plot is incredibly greater and more real, and that there is nothing beyond what the multitude are contented to believe that they can understand, either in imagery, opinion, or sentiment. I wish to preserve a complete incognito, and can trust to you that, whatever else you do, you will at least favor me on this point. Indeed this is essential, deeply essential to its success. After it had been acted, and successfully (could I hope such a thing), I would own it if I pleased, and use the celebrity it might acquire, to my own purposes.

“ What I want you to do, is to procure for me its presentation at Covent Garden. The principal character, Beatrice, is precisely fitted for Miss O’Neil, and it might even seem written for her, (God forbid that I should ever see her play it — it would tear my nerves to pieces,) and in all respects it is fitted only for Covent Garden. The chief male

character I confess I should be very unwilling that any one but Kean should play — that is impossible, and I must be contented with an inferior actor.'

"[I think you know some of the people of that theatre ; or, at least, some one who knows them, and when you have read the play, you may say enough perhaps to induce them not to reject it without consideration — but of this, perhaps, if I may judge from the tragedies which they have accepted, there is no danger at any rate.

"Write to me as soon as you can on this subject, because it is necessary that I should present it, or, if rejected by the theatre, print it this coming season ; lest somebody else should get hold of it, as the story, which now exists only in manuscript, begins to be generally known among the English. The translation which I send you is to be prefixed to the play, together with a print of Beatrice. I have a copy of her picture by Guido, now in the Colonna palace at Rome — the most beautiful creature you can conceive.

"Of course, you will not show the manuscript to any one — and write to me by return of post, at which time the play will be ready to be sent." Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 219, 220.]

"The play was accordingly sent to Mr. Harris. He pronounced the subject to be so objectionable that he could not even submit the part to Miss O'Neil for perusal, but expressed his desire that the author would write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept. Shelley printed a small edition at Leghorn, to insure its correctness ; as he was much annoyed by the many mistakes that crept into his text, when distance prevented him from correcting the press.

"Universal approbation soon stamped *The Cenci* as the best tragedy of modern times. Writing concerning it, Shelley said : 'I have been cautious to avoid the introducing faults of youthful composition ; diffuseness, a profusion of inapplicable imagery, vagueness, generality, and, as Hamlet says, *words, words.*' There is nothing that is not purely dramatic throughout ; and the character of Beatrice, proceeding from vehement struggle to horror, to deadly resolution, and lastly,

to the elevated dignity of calm suffering, joined to passionate tenderness and pathos, is touched with hues so vivid and so beautiful, that the poet seems to have read intimately the secrets of the noble heart imaged in the lovely countenance of the unfortunate girl. The Fifth Act is a masterpiece. It is the finest thing he ever wrote, and may claim proud comparison not only with any contemporary, but preceding poet. The varying feelings of Beatrice are expressed with passionate, heart-reaching eloquence. Every character has a voice that echoes truth in its tones. It is curious, to one acquainted with the written story, to mark the success with which the poet has inwoven the real incidents of the tragedy into his scenes, and yet, through the power of poetry, has obliterated all that would otherwise have shown too harsh or too hideous in the picture. His success was a double triumph ; and often after he was earnestly entreated to write again in a style that commanded popular favor, while it was not less instinct with truth and genius. But the bent of his mind went the other way ; and even when employed on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, he would start off in another direction, and leave the delineations of human passion, which he could depict in so able a manner, for fantastic creations of his fancy, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments with regard to human nature and its destiny, a desire to diffuse which was the master passion of his soul."

[Dowden (ii. 277) states, on the authority of the *Journal*, that the MS. mentioned above was put into Shelley's hands at Leghorn in May, 1818, and copied, May 25, by Mrs. Shelley. This was translated by Shelley and sent to Peacock "to be prefixed to the play," in the London edition.]

#### RELATION OF THE DEATH OF THE FAMILY OF THE CENCI.

The most wicked life which the Roman nobleman, Francesco Cenci, led while he lived in this world, not only occasioned his own ruin and death, but also that of many others, and brought down the entire destruction of his house. This nobleman was the son of Monsignore Cenci, who, having been treasurer during the pontificate of Pius V., left im-

mense wealth to Francesco, his only son. From this inheritance alone he enjoyed an income of 160,000 crowns, and he increased his fortune by marrying an exceedingly rich lady, who died after she had given birth to seven unfortunate children. He then contracted a second marriage with Lucretia Petroni, a lady of a noble Roman family ; but he had no children by her. Sodomy was the least, and atheism the greatest, of the vices of Francesco ; as is proved by the tenor of his life ; for he was three times accused of sodomy, and paid the sum of 100,000 crowns to government, in commutation of the punishment rightfully awarded to this crime : and concerning his religion, it is sufficient to state, that he never frequented any church ; and although he caused a small chapel, dedicated to the apostle St. Thomas, to be built in the court of his palace, his intention in so doing was to bury there all his children, whom he cruelly hated. He had driven the eldest of these, Giacomo, Cristoforo, and Rocco, from the paternal mansion, while they were yet too young to have given him any real cause of displeasure. He sent them to the university of Salamanca, but, refusing to remit to them there the money necessary for their maintenance, they desperately returned home. They found that this change only increased their misery, for the hatred and contempt of their father towards them was so aggravated, that he refused to dress or maintain them, so that they were obliged to have recourse to the Pope, who caused Cenci to make them a fit allowance, with which they withdrew from his house.

The third imprisonment of Francesco for his accustomed crime of sodomy, occurred at this time, and his sons took occasion to supplicate the Pope to punish their father, and to remove so great a monster from his family. The Pope, though before inclined to condemn Francesco to the deserved punishment of death, would not do it at the request of his sons, but permitted him again to compound with the law, by paying the accustomed penalty of 100,000 crowns. The hatred of Francesco towards his sons was augmented by this proceeding on their parts ; he cursed them ; and often also struck and ill-treated his daughters. The eldest of these,

being unable any longer to support the cruelty of her father, exposed her miserable condition to the Pope, and supplicated him either to marry her, according to his choice, or to shut her up in a monastery, that by any means she might be liberated from the cruel oppression of her parent. Her prayer was heard, and the Pope, in pity to her unhappiness, bestowed her in marriage to Signore Carlo Gabrielli, one of the first gentlemen of the city of Gabbio, and obliged Francesco to give her a fitting dowry of some thousand crowns.

Francesco, fearing that his youngest daughter would, when she grew up, follow the example of her sister, bethought himself how to hinder this design, and for that purpose shut her up alone in an apartment of the palace, where he himself brought her food, so that no one might approach her ; and imprisoned her in this manner for several months, often inflicting on her blows with a stick.

In the meantime ensued the death of two of his sons, Rocco and Cristofero — one being assassinated by a surgeon, and the other by Paolo Corso, while he was attending mass. The inhuman father showed every sign of joy on hearing this news, saying that nothing would exceed his pleasure if all his children died, and that when the grave should receive the last he would, as a demonstration of joy, make a bonfire of all that he possessed. And on the present occasion, as a further sign of his hatred, he refused to pay the smallest sum towards the funeral expenses of his murdered sons. Francesco carried his wicked debauchery to such an excess, that he caused girls (of whom he constantly kept a number in his house), and also common courtesans, to sleep in the bed of his wife, and often endeavored, by force and threats, to debauch his daughter Beatrice, who was now grown up, and exceedingly beautiful. He gave her more liberty in his palace, and was not ashamed to seek her naked in her bed, showing himself thus with his courtesans, and making her witness of all that could pass between them and him. He tried to persuade the poor girl, by an enormous heresy, that children born of the commerce of a father with his daughter were all saints, and that the saints who ob-

tained the highest places in Paradise had been thus born. Beatrice's resistance of his infamous desires was punished by blows and ill treatment.

Beatrice, finding it impossible to continue to live in so miserable a manner, followed the example of her sister ; she sent a well-written supplication to the Pope, imploring him to exercise his authority in withdrawing her from the violence and cruelty of her father. But this petition, which might, if listened to, have saved this unfortunate girl from an early death, produced not the least effect. It was afterwards found among the collection of memorials, and it is pretended that it never came before the Pope.

Francesco, having discovered this attempt on the part of his daughter, became more enraged, and redoubled his tyranny ; confining with rigor not only Beatrice, but also his wife. At length, these unhappy women, finding themselves, without hope of relief, driven by desperation, resolved to plan his death.

The Palace Cenci was sometimes visited by a Monsignore Guerra — a young man of handsome person and attractive manners, and of that facile character which might easily be induced to become a partner in any action, good or evil, as it might happen. His countenance was pleasing, and his person tall and well proportioned ; he was somewhat in love with Beatrice, and well acquainted with the turpitude of Francesco's character, and was hated by him on account of the familiar intercourse which subsisted between him and the children of this unnatural father : for this reason he timed his visits with caution, and never came to the house but when he knew that Francesco was absent. He was moved to a lively compassion of the state of Lucretia and Beatrice, who often related their increasing misery to him, and his pity was forever fed and augmented by some new tale of tyranny and cruelty. In one of these conversations Beatrice let fall some words which plainly indicated that she and her mother-in-law contemplated the murder of their tyrant, and Monsignore Guerra not only showed approbation of their design, but also promised to coöperate with them in their undertaking. Thus stimulated, Beatrice communi-

cated the design to her eldest brother, Giacomo, without whose concurrence it was impossible that they should succeed. This latter was easily drawn into consent, since he was utterly disgusted with his father, who ill-treated him, and refused to allow him a sufficient support for his wife and children.

The apartments of Monsignore Guerra were the place in which the circumstances of the crime about to be committed were concerted and determined on. Here Giacomo, with the understanding of his sister and mother-in-law, held various consultations, and finally resolved to commit the murder of Francesco to two of his vassals, who had become his inveterate enemies ; one called Marzio, and the other Olimpio : the latter, by means of Francesco, had been deprived of his post as castellan of the Rock of Petrella.

It was already well known that Francesco, with the permission of Signor Marzio di Colonna, baron of that feud, had resolved to retire to Petrella, and to pass the summer there with his family. Some banditti of the kingdom of Naples were hired, and were instructed to lie in wait in the woods about Petrella, and, upon advice being given them of the approach of Francesco, to seize upon him. This scheme was so arranged that, although the robbers were only to seize and take off Francesco, yet that his wife and children should not be suspected of being accomplices in the act. But the affair did not succeed ; for as the banditti were not informed of his approach in time enough, Francesco arrived safe and sound at Petrella. They were obliged therefore to form some new scheme to obtain the end which every day made them more impatient to effect ; for, Francesco still persisted in his wicked conduct. He, being an old man, above seventy years of age, never quitted the castle ; therefore no use could be made of the banditti, who were still secreted in the environs. It was determined, therefore, to accomplish the murder in Francesco's own house.

Marzio and Olimpio were called to the castle ; and Beatrice, accompanied by her mother-in-law, conversed with them from a window during the night-time, when her father slept. She ordered them to repair to Monsignore Guerra with a



note, in which they were desired to murder Francesco, in consideration of a reward of a thousand crowns : a third to be given them before the act, by Monsignore Guerra, and the other two thirds, by the ladies themselves, after the deed should be accomplished. Having consented to this agreement, they were secretly admitted into the castle the 8th of September, 1598 ; but because this day was the anniversary of the birth of the Blessed Virgin, the Signora Lucretia, held back by her veneration for so holy a time, desired, with the consent of her daughter-in-law, that the execution of the murder should be put off until the following day. They dexterously mixed opium with the drink of Francesco, who, upon going to bed, was soon oppressed by a deep sleep. About midnight his daughter herself led the two assassins into the apartment of her father, and left them there that they might execute the deed they had undertaken, and retired to a chamber close by, where Lucretia remained also, expecting the return of the murderers, and the relation of their success. Soon after the assassins entered, and told the ladies that pity had held them back, and that they could not overcome their repugnance to kill in cold blood a poor, sleeping old man. These words filled Beatrice with anger, and after having bitterly reviled them as cowards and traitors, she exclaimed, " Since you have not courage enough to murder a sleeping man, I will kill my father myself ; but your lives shall not be long secure." The assassins, hearing this short but terrible threat, feared that if they did not commit the deed, the tempest would burst over their own heads, took courage, and reëntered the chamber where Francesco slept, and with a hammer drove a nail into his head, making it pass by his eye, and another they drove into his neck. After a few struggles the unhappy Francesco breathed his last. The murderers departed, after having received the remainder of the promised reward ; besides which, Beatrice gave Marzio a mantle trimmed with gold. After this the two ladies, after drawing out the two nails, enveloped the body in a fine sheet, and carried it to an open gallery that overhung a garden, and had underneath an elder-tree ; from thence they threw it down, so that it

might be believed that Francesco, attending a call of nature, was traversing this gallery, when, being only supported by feeble beams, it had given way, and thus had lost his life.

And so indeed was it believed the next day, when the feigned lamentations of Lucretia and Beatrice, who appeared inconsolable, spread the news of Francesco's death. He received an honorable burial ; and his family, after a short stay at the castle, returned to Rome to enjoy the fruits of their crime. They passed some time there in tranquillity ; but Divine Justice, which would not allow so atrocious a wickedness to remain hid and unpunished, so ordered it, that the Court of Naples, to which the account of the death of Cenci was forwarded, began to entertain doubts concerning the mode by which he came by it, and sent a commissary to examine the body and to take informations. Among other things, this man discovered a circumstance to the prejudice of the family of the deceased : it appeared that the day after the event of her father's death, Beatrice had given to wash a sheet covered with blood, saying : . . . [For the passage here omitted Forman refers the curious to the original Italian (not the French version), in the *Mélanges publiés pour la Société des Bibliophiles Français*. Paris, 1822.] These informations were instantly forwarded to the Court of Rome ; but, nevertheless, several months passed without any step being taken in disfavor of the Cenci family ; and, in the mean time, the youngest son of Francesco died, and two only remained of the five that he had had ; namely, Giacomo and Bernardo. Monsignore Guerra, having heard of the notification made by the Court of Naples to that of Rome, fearing that Marzio and Olimpio might fall into the hands of justice, and be induced to confess their crime, suddenly hired men to murder them, but succeeded only in assassinating Olimpio at the city of Terni. Marzio, who had escaped this misfortune, soon incurred that of being imprisoned at Naples, where he confessed the whole ; and instantly, while the arrival of Marzio at Rome from Naples was expected, Giacomo and Bernardo were arrested, and imprisoned in the Corte Savella, and Lucretia and Beatrice were confined in their own house under a good guard ; but afterwards they

were also conducted to the prison where were the brothers. They were here examined, and all constantly denied the crime, and particularly Beatrice, who also denied having given to Marzio the mantle trimmed with gold, of which mention was before made ; and Marzio, overcome and moved by the presence of mind and courage of Beatrice, retracted all that he had deposed at Naples, and, rather than again confess, obstinately died under his torments.

There not being sufficient proof to justify putting the Cenci family to the torture, they were all transferred to Castello, where they remained several months in tranquillity. But, for their misfortune, one of the murderers of Olimpio at Terni fell into the hands of justice ; he confessed that he had been hired to this deed by Monsignore Guerra, who had also commissioned him to assassinate Marzio. Fortunately for this prelate, he received prompt information of the testimony given against him, and was able to hide himself for a time, and to plan his escape, which was very difficult ; for his stature, the fairness and beauty of his countenance, and his light hair, made him conspicuous for discovery. He changed his dress for that of a charcoal-man, blackening his face, and shaving his head ; and thus disguised, driving two asses before him, with some bread and onions in his hands, he passed freely through Rome, under the eyes of the ministers of justice, who sought him everywhere ; and, without being recognized by any one, passed out of one of the gates of the city, where, after a short time, he was met by the sbirri, who were searching the country, and passed unknown by them, not without suffering great fear at his risk of being discovered and arrested : by means of this ingenious disguise he effected his escape to a safe country.

The flight of Monsignore Guerra, joined to the confession of the murderer of Olimpio, aggravated the other proofs so much, that the Cenci were retransferred from Castello to Corte Savella, and were condemned to be put to the torture. The two sons sank vilely under their torments, and became convicted ; Lucretia, being of advanced age, having completed her fiftieth year, and being of a fat make, was not able to resist the torture of the cord, and therefore told all

she knew. But the Signora Beatrice, being young, lively, and strong, neither with good nor ill treatment, with menaces, nor fear of torture, would allow a single word to pass her lips which might inculpate her ; and even, by her lively eloquence, confused the judges who examined her. The Pope, being informed of all that passed by Signor Ulysse Moraci, the judge employed in this affair, became suspicious that the beauty of Beatrice had softened the mind of this judge, and committed the cause to another, who found out another mode of torment, called the torture of the hair ; and when she was already tied under this torture, he brought before her her mother-in-law and brothers. They began altogether to exhort her to confess ; saying, that since the crime had been committed, they must suffer the punishment. Beatrice, after some resistance, said, " So you all wish to die, and to disgrace and ruin our house ? — This is not right ; but since it so pleases you, so let it be : " — and turning to the jailors, she told them to unbind her, and that all the examinations might be brought to her, saying, " That which I ought to confess, that will I confess ; that to which I ought to assent, to that will I assent ; and that which I ought to deny, that will I deny : " — and in this manner she was convicted without having confessed. They were then all unbound ; and, since it was now five months since all had met, they wished to eat together that day : but, three days afterwards, they were again divided — the ladies being left in the Corte Savella, and the brothers being transferred to the dungeons of the Tordinona.

The Pope, after having seen all the examinations, and the entire confessions, ordered that the delinquents should be drawn through the streets at the tails of horses, and afterwards decapitated. Many cardinals and princes interested themselves, and entreated that at least they might be allowed to draw up their defence. The Pope at first refused to comply, replying with severity, and asking these intercessors what defence had been allowed to Francesco, when he had been so barbarously murdered in his sleep ; but afterwards he yielded to allow them twenty-five days' time. The most celebrated Roman advocates undertook to defend the crimi-

nals ; and, at the end of the appointed time, brought their writings to the Pope. The first that spoke was the advocate Nicolas di Angelis ; but the Pope interrupted him angrily in the middle of his discourse, saying that he greatly wondered that there existed in Rome children unnatural enough to kill their father ; and that there should be found advocates depraved enough to defend so horrible a crime. These words silenced all except the advocate Farinacci ; who said, “ Holy Father, we have not fallen at your feet to defend the atrocity of the crime, but to save the life of the innocent, when your holiness will deign to hear us.” The Pope listened patiently to him for four hours, and then, taking the writings, dismissed them. The advocate Altieri, who was the last to depart, turned back, and, throwing himself at the feet of the Pope, said that his office as advocate to the poor would not allow him to refuse to appear in this affair ; and the Pope replied that he was not surprised at the part that he, but at that which the others had taken. Instead of retiring to rest, he spent the whole night in studying the cause with the Cardinal di San Marcello — noting with great care the most exculpating passages of the writing of the advocate Farinacci ; with which he became so satisfied, that he gave hope of granting a pardon to the criminals ; for the crimes of the father and children were contrasted and balanced in this writing ; and to save the sons, the greater guilt was attributed to Beatrice ; and thus, by saving the mother-in-law, the daughter might the more easily escape, who was dragged, as it were, to the committing so enormous a crime by the cruelty of her father. The Pope, therefore, that the criminals might enjoy the benefit of time, ordered them again to be confined in secret. But since, by the high dispensation of Providence, it was resolved that they should incur the just penalty of parricide, it so happened, that at this time Paolo Santa Croce killed his mother in the town of Subiaco, because she refused to give up her inheritance to him. And the Pope, upon the occurrence of this second crime of this nature, resolved to punish those guilty of the first ; and the more so, because the matricide Santa Croce had escaped from the vengeance of the law by flight. The

Pope returned to Monte Cavallo the 6th of May, that he might consecrate the next morning, in the neighboring church of S. Maria degli Angeli, the Cardinal Diverstiana, appointed by him to be bishop of Olumbré, on the 3d of May of the same year, 1599 : on the 10th of May he called into his presence Monsignore Ferrante Taverna, governor of Rome, and said to him, " I give up into your hands the Cenci cause, that you may as soon as you can execute the justice allotted to them." As soon as the governor arrived at his palace, he communicated the sentence to, and held a council with, the criminal judge, concerning the manner of death to be inflicted on the criminals. Many nobles instantly hastened to the palaces of the Quirinal and the Vatican, to implore the grace of at least a private death for the ladies, and the pardon of the innocent Bernardo ; and, fortunately, they were in time to save the life of this youth, because many hours were necessarily employed in preparing the scaffold over the bridge of S. Angelo, and then in waiting for the Confraternity of Mercy, who were to accompany the condemned to the place of suffering.

The sentence was executed the morning of Saturday, the 11th of May. The messengers charged with the communication of the sentence, and the Brothers of the Conforteria, were sent to the several prisons at five the preceding night ; and at six the sentence of death was communicated to the unhappy brothers while they were placidly sleeping. Beatrice on hearing it broke into a piercing lamentation, and into passionate gesture, exclaiming, " How is it possible, O my God ! that I must so suddenly die ? " Lucretia, as prepared and already resigned to her fate, listened without terror to the reading of this terrible sentence ; and with gentle exhortations induced her daughter-in-law to enter the chapel with her ; and the latter, whatever excess she might have indulged in on the first intimation of a speedy death, so much the more now courageously supported herself, and gave every one certain proofs of a humble resignation. Having requested that a notary might be allowed to come to her, and her request being granted, she made her will, in which she left 15,000 crowns to the Fraternity of the Sacre Stimmate ;

and willed that all her dowry should be employed in portioning for marriage fifty maidens ; and Lucretia, imitating the example of her daughter-in-law, ordered that she should be buried in the church of S. Gregorio at Monte Celio, willed 32,000 crowns for charitable uses, and made other legacies ; after which they passed some time in the Conforteria, reciting psalms and litanies and other prayers, with so much fervor that it well appeared that they were assisted by the peculiar grace of God. At eight o'clock they confessed, heard mass, and received the holy communion. Beatrice, considering that it was not decorous to appear before the judges and on the scaffold with their splendid dresses, ordered two dresses, one for herself, and the other for her mother-in-law, made in the manner of the nuns — gathered up, and with long sleeves of black cotton for Lucretia, and of common silk for herself ; with a large cord girdle. When these dresses came, Beatrice rose, and, turning to Lucretia — “Mother,” said she, “the hour of our departure is drawing near, let us dress therefore in these clothes, and let us mutually aid one another in this last office.” Lucretia readily complied with this invitation, and they dressed, each helping the other, showing the same indifference and pleasure as if they were dressing for a feast.

The Company of Mercy arrived soon after at the prisons of the Tordinona ; and while they were waiting below in the street with the crucifix until the condemned should descend, an accident happened, which gave rise to such a tumult among the immense crowd there collected that there was danger of much disorder. It thus happened : some foreign gentlemen, who were posted at a high window, inadvertently threw down a flower-pot which was outside the window, which falling on one of the brothers of the Order of Mercy, mortally wounded him. This caused a disturbance in the crowd ; and those who were too far off to know the cause, took flight, and falling one over the other, several were wounded. When the tumult was calmed, the brothers Giacomo and Bernardo descended to the door of the prison, near which opportunely happened to be some fiscal officers, who, going up to Bernardo, told him that through the clem-

ency of the sovereign pontiff, his life was spared to him, with this condition, that he should be present at the death of his relations. A scarlet mantle trimmed with gold, in which he had at first been conducted to prison, was given him, to envelop him. Giacomo was already on the car, when the *placet* of the Pope arrived, freeing him from the severer portion of the punishment added to the sentence, and ordering that it should be executed only by the hammer and quartering.

The funeral procession passed through the *Via dell' Orso*, by the *Apollinara*, thence through the *Piazza Navona* ; from the church of *S. Pantalio* to the *Piazza Pollarola*, through the *Campo di Fiori*, *S. Carlo a Castinari*, to the *Arco de' Conte Cenci* ; proceeding, it stopped under the *Palace Cenci*, and then finally rested at the *Corte Savella*, to take the two ladies. When these arrived, *Lucretia* remained last, dressed in black, as has been described, with a veil of the same color, which covered her as far as her girdle ; *Beatrice* was beside her, also covered by a veil ; they wore velvet slippers, with silk roses and gold fastenings ; and, instead of manacles, their wrists were bound by a silk cord, which was fastened to their girdles in such a manner as to give them almost the free use of their hands. Each had in her left hand the holy sign of benediction, and in the right a handkerchief, with which *Lucretia* wiped her tears, and *Beatrice* the perspiration from her forehead. Being arrived at the place of punishment, *Bernardo* was left on the scaffold, and the others were conducted to the chapel. During this dreadful separation, this unfortunate youth, reflecting that he was soon going to behold the decapitation of his nearest relatives, fell down in a deadly swoon, from which, however, he was at last recovered, and seated opposite the block. The first that came forth to die was *Lucretia*, who, being fat, found difficulty in placing herself to receive the blow. The executioner taking off her handkerchief, her neck was discovered, which was still handsome, although she was fifty years of age. Blushing deeply, she cast her eyes down, and then, casting them up to heaven, full of tears, she exclaimed, "Behold, dearest Jesus, this guilty soul about to appear be-



fore thee — to give an account of its acts, mingled with many crimes. When it shall appear before thy Godhead, I pray thee to look on it with an eye of mercy, and not of justice." She then began to recite the psalm *Miserere mei Deus*, and placing her neck under the axe, the head was struck from her body while she was repeating the second verse of this psalm, at the words *et secundum multitudinem*. When the executioner raised the head, the populace saw with wonder that the countenance long retained its vivacity, until it was wrapped up in a black handkerchief, and placed in a corner of the scaffold. While the scaffold was being arranged for Beatrice, and whilst the Brotherhood returned to the chapel for her, the balcony of a shop filled with spectators fell, and five of those underneath were wounded, so that two died a few days after. Beatrice, hearing the noise, asked the executioner if her mother had died well, and it being replied that she had, she knelt before the crucifix, and spoke thus : — " Be thou everlastingly thanked, O my gracious Saviour, since, by the good death of my mother, thou hast given me assurance of thy mercy towards me." Then, rising, she courageously and devoutly walked towards the scaffold, repeating by the way several prayers with so much fervor of spirit, that all who heard her shed tears of compassion. Ascending the scaffold, while she arranged herself, she also turned her eyes to heaven, and thus prayed : — " Most beloved Jesus, who, relinquishing thy divinity, becamest a man ; and didst through love purge my sinful soul also of its original sin with thy precious blood ; deign, I beseech thee, to accept that which I am about to shed at thy most merciful tribunal, as a penalty which may cancel my many crimes, and spare me a part of that punishment justly due to me." Then she placed her head under the axe, which at one blow was divided from her body, as she was repeating the second verse of the psalm *De profundis*, at the words *fiant aures tue* ; the blow gave a violent motion to her body, and discomposed her dress. The executioner raised the head to the view of the people, and in placing it in the coffin placed underneath, the cord by which it was suspended slipped from his hold, and the head fell to the ground, shed-

ding a great deal of blood, which was wiped up with water and sponges.

On the death of his sister, Bernardo again fainted ; the most efficacious remedies were for some time uselessly employed upon him ; and it was believed by all that his second swoon, having found him already overcome and without strength, had deprived him of life. At length, after the lapse of a quarter of an hour, he came to himself, and by slow degrees recovered the use of his senses. Giacomo was then conducted to the scaffold, and the executioner took from him the mourning cloak which enveloped him. He fixed his eyes on Bernardo, and then, turning, addressed the people with a loud voice : “ Now that I am about to present myself before the Tribunal of infallible Truth, I swear that if my Saviour, pardoning me my faults, shall place me in the road to salvation, I will incessantly pray for the preservation of his Holiness, who has spared me the aggravation of punishment but too much due to my enormous crime, and has granted life to my brother Bernardo, who is most innocent of the guilt of parricide, as I have constantly declared in all my examinations. It only afflicts me in these my last moments that he should have been obliged to be present at so fatal a scene : but since, O my God, it has so pleased thee, *fiat voluntas tua.*” After speaking thus, he knelt down ; the executioner blinded his eyes, and tied his legs to the scaffold, gave him a blow on the temple with a leaded hammer, cut off his head, and cut his body into four pieces which were fixed on the hooks of the scaffolding.

When the last penalty of justice was over, Bernardo was reconducted to the prison of the Tordinona, where he was soon attacked by a burning fever ; he was bled and received other remedies, so that in the end he recovered his health, though not without great suffering. The bodies of Lucretia and Beatrice were left at the end of the bridge until the evening, illuminated by two torches, and surrounded by so great a concourse of people that it was impossible to cross the bridge. An hour after dark, the body of Beatrice was placed in a coffin, covered by a black velvet pall, richly adorned with gold ; garlands of flowers were placed, one at

her head, and another at her feet ; and the body was strewed with flowers. It was accompanied to the church of S. Peter in Montorio by the Brotherhood of the Order of Mercy, and followed by many Franciscan monks, with great pomp and innumerable torches ; she was there buried before the high altar, after the customary ceremony had been performed. By reason of the distance of the church from the bridge, it was four hours after dark before the ceremony was finished. Afterwards the body of Lucretia, accompanied in the same manner, was carried to the church of S. Gregorio upon the Celian Hill, where, after the ceremony, it was honorably buried.

Beatrice was rather tall, of a fair complexion ; and she had a dimple on each cheek, which, especially when she smiled, added a grace to her lovely countenance that transported every one who beheld her. Her hair appeared like threads of gold ; and, because they were extremely long, she used to tie it up, and, when afterwards she loosened it, the splendid ringlets dazzled the eyes of the spectator. Her eyes were of a deep blue, pleasing, and full of fire. To all these beauties she added, both in words and actions, a spirit and a majestic vivacity that captivated every one. She was twenty years of age when she died.

Lucretia was as tall as Beatrice, but her full make made her appear less ; she was also fair, and so fresh complexioned, that at fifty, which was her age when she died, she did not appear above thirty. Her hair was black, and her teeth regular and white to an extraordinary degree.

Giacomo was of a middle size, fair but ruddy, and with black eyebrows ; affable in his nature, of good address, and well skilled in every science, and in all knightly exercises. He was not more than twenty-eight years of age when he died.

Lastly, Bernardo so closely resembled Beatrice in complexion, features, and everything else, that if they had changed clothes the one might easily have been taken for the other. His mind also seemed formed in the same model as that of his sister ; and at the time of her death he was six-and-twenty years old.

He remained in the prison of Tordinona until the month of September of the same year, after which time, at the intercession of the most Venerable Grand Brotherhood of the Most Holy Crucifix of St. Marcellus, he obtained the favor of his liberty upon paying the sum of 25,000 crowns to the Hospital of the Most Holy Trinity of Pilgrims. Thus he, as the sole remnant of the Cenci family, became heir to all their possessions. He is now married, and has a son named Cristofero.

The most faithful portrait of Beatrice exists in the Palace of the Villa Pamfili, without the gate of San Pancrazio : if any other is to be found in the Palazzo Cenci, it is not shown to any one — so as not to renew the memory of so horrible an event.

This was the end of this family : and until the time when this account is put together it has not been possible to find the Marquis Paolo Santa Croce ; but there is a rumor that he dwells in Brescia, a city of the Venetian states.

[Rossetti (ii. 435) refers the student to Henri Beyle (de Stendhal), *Chroniques et Nouvelles*, for a parallel version of the story of the Cenci, and notes several points of disagreement with Shelley's *Relation*. A MS. volume, derived from London and marked "Date circa 1735, transcript from old Manuscript," which contains the narrative of the Cenci, with other Roman histories, is mentioned by a writer as possibly Shelley's original, in the *Rivista Italiana*, May 15, 1892, p. 1039. Medwin (*Life*, i. 345), refers to another MS. of the story, similarly bound up, in Genoa, and states that copies are common in Italian Libraries.]

Mrs. Shelley's Journal, April 22, 1819 : "Visit the Palazzo Corunna [Colonna] and see the picture of Beatrice Cenci." Mrs. Marshall, *Life of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, i. 239 : ["A few days later (May 11) they wandered through the ancient dwelling of the Cenci family, a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture, in an obscure quarter of Rome, hard by the gate of the Ghetto. By May 14, as an entry in Mary's journal shows, Shelley was at work upon his tragedy." Dowden, ii. 277, 278.]

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Peacock, July, 1819 : [Printed above in Mrs. Shelley's note.]

Peacock, *Works*, iii. 435 : "He sent it to me to introduce it to Covent Garden Theatre. I did so, but the result was as I expected. It could not be received ; though great admiration was expressed of the author's powers, and great hopes of his success with a less repulsive subject. But he could not clip his wings to the littleness of the acting drama ; and though he adhered to his purpose of writing for the stage, and chose Charles I. for his subject, he did not make much progress in the task."

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Peacock, August 22 (?) 1819 : "My work on *The Cenci*, which was done in two months [the first draft was finished on August 8, Dowden, ii. 279] was a fine antidote to nervous medicines and kept up, I think, the pain in my side as sticks do a fire. Since then I have materially improved." Peacock, *Works*, iii. 465.

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Hunt, September 3, 1819 : "I have written something and finished it, different from anything else, and a new attempt for me ; and I mean to dedicate it to you. I should not have done so without your approbation, but I asked your picture last night, and it smiled assent. If I did not think it in some degree worthy of you, I would not make you a public offering of it. I expect to have to write to you soon about it. If Ollier is not turned Christian, Jew, or become infected with the *Murrain*, he will publish it. Don't let him be frightened, for it is nothing which by any courtesy of language can be termed either moral or immoral." Hunt, *Lord Byron*, i. 392.

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Ollier, September 6, 1819 : "I shall also send you another work, calculated to produce a very popular effect, and totally in a different style from anything I have yet composed. This will be sent already printed." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 119.

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Miss Curran, August 5, 1819 : "I have nearly finished my *Cenci*, which Mary likes. I wish very much to get a good engraving made of the picture in the Colonna Palace, and to have the plate by the autumn. How much time and money would a first rate Roman artist demand for such a work ? Dare I ask you to add to the amount of so many favors, which must be long unrepaid, that

of charging yourself with such a kindness?" Dowden, *Life*, ii. 272, 273. [The cost was found to be beyond Shelley's means.]

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Peacock, September 9, 1819: "I send you the tragedy. You will see that the subject has not been treated as you suggested, and why it was not susceptible of such treatment. In fact, it was then already printing when I received your letter, and it has been treated in such a manner that I do not see how the subject forms an objection. You know *Œdipus* is performed on the fastidious French stage, a play much more broad than this. I confess I have some hopes, and some friends here persuade me that they are not unfounded." ["The *Œdipus* of Dryden and Lee was often performed in the last century; but never in my time. There is no subject of this class treated with such infinite skill and delicacy as in Alfieri's beautiful tragedy, *Mirra*. It was the character in which Madame Ristori achieved her great success in Paris; but she was prohibited from performing it in London. If the Covent Garden managers had accepted *The Cenci*, I doubt if the licenser would have permitted the performance." Peacock, *Note*], Peacock, *Works*, iii. 465, 466.

[*The Cenci* was performed privately in London by the Shelley Society in 1886, but on attempting to repeat the performance on August 4, 1892, Shelley's Centenary, such obstacles arose in obtaining a theatre that the project was abandoned.]

Mrs. Shelley (from Leghorn) to Miss Curran, September 18, 1819: "Shelley has finished his tragedy, and it is sent to London to be presented to the managers. It is still a *deep secret* and only one person, Peacock (who presents it), knows anything about it in England. With Shelley's public and private enemies, it would certainly fail if known to be his; his sister-in-law alone would hire enough people to damn it. It is written with great care, and we are in hopes that its story is sufficiently polished not to shock the audience. We shall see." Mrs. Marshall, *Life*, i. 256, 257.

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Peacock, September 21, 1819: "You will have received a short letter sent with the tragedy,

and the tragedy itself by this time. I am, you may believe, anxious to hear what you think of it, and how the manager talks about it. I have printed in Italy 250 copies, because it costs, with all duties and freightage, about half what it would cost in London, and these copies will be sent by sea. My other reason was a belief that the seeing it in print would enable the people at the theatre to judge more easily. . . . If my play should be accepted, don't you think it would excite some interest, and take off the unexpected horror of the story, by showing that the events are real, if it could be made to appear in some paper in some form? You will hear from me again shortly as I send you by sea the Cenci's printed, which you will be good enough to keep." Peacock, *Works*, iii. 466, 467.

Shelley (from Florence) to Mrs. Gisborne, October 13, 14 (?) 1819: "I had forgotten to say that I should be very much obliged to you, if you would contrive to send the Cenci's, which are at the printer's, to England, by the next ship. I forgot it in the hurry of departure. — I have just heard from P[eacock,] saying that he don't think that my tragedy will do, and that he don't much like it. But I ought to say, to blunt the edge of his criticism, that he is a nursling of the exact and superficial school in poetry. If Mr. G. is returned, send the *Prometheus* with them." Mrs. Shelley, *Essays and Letters*, ii. 235.

Shelley (from Florence) to Ollier, October 15, 1819: "I am on the point of sending to you 250 copies of a work which I have printed in Italy, which you will have to pay four or five pounds duty upon, on my account. Hunt will tell you the *kind of thing* it is, and in the course of the winter I shall send directions for its publication, *until the arrival of which directions I request that you would have the kindness not to open the box, or, if by necessity it is opened, to abstain from observing yourself, or permitting others to observe, what it contains.* I trust this confidently to you, it being of consequence. Meanwhile, assure yourself that this work has no reference, direct or indirect, to politics, or religion, or personal satire, and that this precaution is merely literary." *Shelley Memorials*, pp. 120, 121.

Shelley (from Florence) to Ollier, December 15, 1819 : "When the box comes, you may write a note to Mr. Peacock, or it would be better to call on him and ask if *my tragedy is accepted?* If not, publish what you find in the box. I think it will succeed as a publication." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 123.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, March 6, 1820 : "*Cenci* is written for the multitude, and ought to sell well." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 137. [This letter contains the passage ante, p. 438, directing Ollier how to obtain the box sent by sea.]

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, March 13, 1820 : "My friends here have great hopes that *The Cenci* will succeed as a publication. It was refused at Drury Lane, although expressly written for theatrical exhibition, on a plea of the story being too horrible. I believe it singularly fitted for the stage." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 138. [Lady Shelley suggests, in a footnote, that "Drury Lane" is a slip of the pen for Covent Garden.]

Shelley (from Pisa) to Medwin, May 1, 1820 : "I have just published a tragedy called *The Cenci*, and I see they have reprinted it at Paris at Galignani's. I dare say you will see the French edition, full of errors of course, at Geneva. The people from England tell me it is liked. It is dismal enough. My chief endeavor was to produce a delineation of passions which I had never participated in, in chaste language, and according to the rules of enlightened art. I don't think very much of it ; but it is for you to judge." Trelawny, *Records*, ii. 35, 36.

Mrs. Shelley (from Leghorn) to Miss Curran, June 20, 1820 : "How do you like *The Cenci*? It sells, you must know, of which I am very glad." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 142.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Medwin, July 20, 1820 : "Your objection to *The Cenci* — as to the introduction of the name of God — is good, inasmuch as the play is addressed to a Protestant people ; but *we* Catholics speak eternally and familiarly of the First Person of the Trinity, and, amongst us, religion is more interwoven with, and is less extraneous to, the system of ordinary life. As to *Cenci's Curse*, I know not whether I can defend it or no. I wish I may be able ; and, as it often happens respecting the worst part of



an author's work, it is a particular favorite with me. I prided myself — as since your approbation I hope that I had just cause to do — upon the two concluding lines of the play. I confess I cannot approve of the squeamishness which excludes the exhibition of such *subjects* from the scene — a squeamishness the produce, as I firmly believe, of a lower tone of the public mind, and foreign to the majestic and confident wisdom of the golden age of our country." Trelawny, *Records*, ii. 37, 38.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Keats, July 27, 1820 : "*The Cenci* I hope you have already received — it was studiously composed in a different style.

" 'Below the *good* how far ! but far above the *great*.' "

*Westminster Review*, April, 1841.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, January 20, 1821 : "The reviews of my *Cenci* (though some of them, and especially that marked 'John Scott,' are written with great malignity) on the whole give me as much encouragement as a person of my habits of thinking is capable of receiving from such a source, which is, inasmuch as they coincide with, and confirm, my own decisions. My next attempt (if I should write more) will be a drama, in the composition of which I shall attend to the advice of my critics to a certain degree. But I doubt whether I *shall* write more. I could be content either with the Hell or the Paradise of poetry ; but the torments of its Purgatory vex me without exciting my powers sufficiently to put an end to the vexation." *Shelley Memorials*, pp. 135, 136.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Peacock, February 15, 1821 : "I am devising literary plans of some magnitude. But nothing is more difficult and unwelcome than to write without a confidence of finding readers ; and if my play of *The Cenci* found none or few, I despair of ever producing anything that shall merit them." Peacock, *Works*, iii. 472.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, February 16, 1821 : "Pray send me news of my intellectual children. . . . *The Cenci* ought to have been popular." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 153.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Hunt, August 26, 1821 : "He [Byron] was loud . . . in censure of *The Cenci*. Certainly if *Marino Faliero* is a drama, *The Cenci* is not ; but that is between ourselves." Hunt, *Lord Byron*, i. 406.

Trelawny, *Records* (i. 117): "In writing *The Cenci* my object was to see how I could succeed in describing passions I have never felt, and to tell the most dreadful story in pure and refined language. The image of Beatrice haunted me after seeing her portrait. The story is well authenticated, and the details far more horrible than I have painted them. *The Cenci* is a work of art; it is not colored by my feelings nor obscured by my metaphysics. I don't think much of it. It gave me less trouble than anything I have written of the same length."

Keats to Shelley, August 10, 1820: "I received a copy of *The Cenci*, as from yourself, from Hunt. There is only one part of it I am judge of — the poetry and dramatic effect, which by many spirits nowadays is considered the Mammon. A modern work, it is said, must have a purpose, which may be the God. An artist must serve Mammon; he must have 'self-concentration' — selfishness, perhaps. You, I am sure, will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity, and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore. The thought of such discipline must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furled for six months together. And is not this extraordinary talk for the writer of *Endymion*, whose mind was like a pack of scattered cards?" *Westminster Review*, April, 1841.

Horace Smith to Shelley, September 4, 1820 [printed ante, p. 439].

*The Cenci* was noticed in *The London Literary Gazette*, April 1, 1820, *The New Monthly Magazine*, May, 1820, *The London Magazine*, May, 1820, *The Indicator*, July 19, 26, 1820.

#### THE MASK OF ANARCHY

The / Masque of Anarchy. / A Poem. / By Percy Bysshe Shelley. / Now first Published, with a Preface / By Leigh Hunt. / Hope is strong; / Justice and Truth their winged child have found. / Revolt of Islam. / London: / Edward Moxon, 64, New Bond Street. / 1832.

Collation: Octavo. Fly-title to *The Masque of Anarchy* (with blank verso), pp. i. ii.; Title (with blank verso), pp.

iii. iv. ; Preface, pp. v.-xxx. ; *The Masque of Anarchy*, pp. 1-47 (with imprint London : / Bradbury and Evans, Printers, / Bouverie Street, at foot of page). Moxon's Advertisements, 2 pp. Issued in boards, lettered Shelley's / *Masque*.

A nearly complete MS. is in the possession of Mr. T. J. Wise, being the one sent by Mrs. Shelley to Sir John Bowring, February 25, 1826, and has been issued in facsimile by the Shelley Society (*Publications Fourth Series, No. 1*). A transcript in Mrs. Shelley's hand sent to Hunt to print in the fall of 1819, is in the possession of Mr. Townshend Mayer, and is described by Forman in his edition. The poem is indexed in the Harvard MS., but the leaves are cut out.

NOTES showing the state of other editions and including minor variations beyond what has been already noted. 1839<sup>2</sup> follows 1839<sup>1</sup> in all cases, and both follow 1832 except as noted in the footnotes and below. The cancelings in the Hunt MS. are by Shelley.

- iv. 2 *Lord Hunt* MS. cancelled, *Lord E* — 1832. *Lord* is written in as a correction in the *Wise* MS., but being cancelled by Shelley in the *Hunt* MS. is rejected.
- vi. 1 *Bible* starred 1832.
- 3 *Sidmouth* starred 1832.
- ix. 2 *And in* Rossetti, Forman, Dowden.
- 3 *On* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.
- xiii. 1 *Over Hunt* MS. cancelled.
- 2 *the* all editions.
- xv. 1 *For from . . . Hunt* MS. *For from . . . to meet him came* *Wise* MS.
- xx. 2 *nightly* Rossetti, Forman.
- xxx. 4 *and* all editions.
- xxxiii 3-5 omit, *Wise* MS.
- xxxvi. 4 *had cried* all editions.
- xxxviii. 5 *Ye are many, they are few* 1839<sup>1</sup>.
- xlvi. 3 *wills* all editions.
- 1. 1-4 omit, Forman, Dowden.
- lv. 4 *To* Rossetti, Dowden.

lviii. 4 *the* all editions.

lxiv. 4 *So serene they curse it not* Forman, Dowden.

lxxi. 4 *around* ; 1832.

lxxx. 4 *of an* Rossetti, Forman.

[The Manchester or Peterloo Massacre was occasioned by an attempt to hold a mass meeting on August 9, 1819, at St. Peter's Field, Manchester, in behalf of parliamentary reform. It was declared illegal and forbidden by the magistrates, and was in consequence postponed. It was held August 16, and attended by several thousands. The chief constable was ordered to arrest the ringleaders, and in particular the chairman, Henry Hunt, an agitator unconnected with Leigh Hunt. He asked military aid, and went accompanied by forty cavalymen ; on the failure of the officer and his escort to penetrate the crowd which surrounded them, orders were given three hundred hussars to disperse the people ; in the charge six persons were killed, twenty or thirty received sabre wounds, and fifty or more were injured in other ways. Eldon was Lord High Chancellor, Sidmouth, Home Secretary, and Castlereagh, Foreign Secretary ; the government supported the authorities and publicly approved their conduct.]

#### CONTEMPORARY RECORDS : —

Mrs. Shelley's Note (1839<sup>2</sup>, p. 251) : " Though Shelley's first eager desire to excite his countrymen to resist openly the oppressions existent during ' the good old times ' had faded with early youth, still his warmest sympathies were for the people. He was a republican, and loved a democracy. He looked on all human beings as inheriting an equal right to possess the dearest privileges of our nature, the necessaries of life, when fairly earned by labor, and intellectual instruction. His hatred of any despotism, that looked upon the people as not to be consulted or protected from want and ignorance, was intense. He was residing near Leghorn, at Villa Valsovano, writing *The Cenci*, when the news of the Manchester Massacre reached us ; it roused in him violent emotions of indignation and compassion. The

great truth that the many, if accordant and resolute, could control the few, as was shown some years after, made him long to teach his injured countrymen how to resist. Inspired by these feelings, he wrote *The Masque of Anarchy*, which he sent to his friend, Leigh Hunt, to be inserted in the *Examiner*, of which he was then the Editor.

“ ‘I did not insert it,’ Leigh Hunt writes in his valuable and interesting preface to this poem, when he printed it in 1832, ‘because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of his spirit, that walked in this flaming robe of verse.’ Days of outrage have passed away, and with them the exasperation that would cause such an appeal to the many to be injurious. Without being aware of them, they at one time acted on his suggestions, and gained the day ; but they rose when human life was respected by the minister in power ; such was not the case during the administration which excited Shelley’s abhorrence.

“ The poem was written for the people, and is therefore in a more popular tone than usual ; portions strike as abrupt and unpolished, but many stanzas are all his own. I heard him repeat, and admired those beginning, —

“ ‘ My Father Time is old and gray,

before I knew to what poem they were to belong. But the most touching passage is that which describes the blessed effects of liberty ; they might make a patriot of any man, whose heart was not wholly closed against his humbler fellow-creatures.”

Shelley (from Leghorn) to Ollier, September 6, 1819 : “ The same day that your letter came, came the news of the Manchester work, and the torrent of my indignation has not yet done boiling in my veins. I wait anxiously to hear how the country will express its sense of this bloody, murderous oppression of its destroyers. ‘Something must be done. What, yet I know not.’ ” [*The Cenci*, III. i. 86, 87] *Shelley Memorials*, p. 119.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Peacock, September 9, 1819 : “ Many thanks for your attention in sending the papers

which contain the terrible and important news of Manchester. These are, as it were, the distant thunders of the terrible storm which is approaching. The tyrants here, as in the French Revolution, have first shed blood. May their execrable lessons not be learned with equal docility ! I still think there will be no coming to close quarters until financial affairs bring the oppressors and the oppressed together. Pray let me have the *earliest* political news which you consider of importance at this crisis." Forman, *Prose Works of Shelley*, iv. 123, 124. [Peacock, *Works*, iii. 465, omits some phrases.]

Shelley (from Pisa) to Peacock, September 21, 1819 : " I have received all the papers you sent me, and the *Examiners* regularly, perfumed with muriatic acid. [By the Quarantine officials.] What an infernal business, — this of Manchester ! What is to be done ? Something assuredly. H. Hunt [Henry Hunt, Chairman of the Manchester Meeting, unconnected with Leigh Hunt] has behaved, I think, with great spirit and coolness in the whole affair." Forman, *Prose Works*, etc., iv. 124, 125. [Peacock, *Works*, iii. 467, omits some phrases.]

Shelley (from Florence) to Hunt, November, 1819 : " You do not tell me whether you have received my lines on the Manchester affair. They are of the exoteric species, and are meant, not for the *Indicator*, but the *Examiner*. . . . I enclose you in this a piece for the *Examiner*, or let it share the fate, whatever that fate may be, of the *Mask of Anarchy*. . . . The great thing to do is to hold the balance between popular impatience and tyrannical obstinacy ; to inculcate with fervor both the right of resistance and the duty of forbearance. You know my principles incite me to take all the good I can get in politics, forever aspiring to something more. I am one of those whom nothing will fully satisfy, but who are ready to be partially satisfied by all that is practicable. We shall see." Hunt, *Lord Byron*, i. 400-402.

Mrs. Shelley (from Kentish Town) to Sir John Bowring, February 25, 1826 : " The longer poem I send was never published. It was called *The Mask of Anarchy*, and written in the first strong feelings excited by the cutting down of

the people at Manchester in 1819. *Facsimile of Shelley's MS.* p. 52.

#### PETER BELL THE THIRD

*Peter Bell the Third* was published by Mrs. Shelley, 1839<sup>2</sup>, among the poems of 1819. Forman notes that a few lines (IV. ii. 3-5, vi. 1-4, V. xiv. 1-5) appeared as mottoes to chapters in Mrs. Shelley's *Lodore*, 1835. A rough draft exists among the Boscombe MSS. The variations in other editions, not already noted, are, in the Prologue, 10 *Aldric's* 1839<sup>2</sup>, Forman, Dowden; and in III. ii. 2 *planning*, 1839<sup>2</sup>, both misprints. Of the persons alluded to, *Thomas Brown, Esq., the Lounger, H. F.* is Moore, the name being his *nom de plume*, and *H. F.* standing conjecturally for Historian of the Fudges (Garnett) or *Hibernicæ Filius* (Rossetti); Castles (III. ii. 1) was a government spy (Rossetti) as was Oliver (VII. iv. 4) "prominent in the case of Brandreth, Turner and Ludlam, whose execution in 1817 inspired Shelley to write *The Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte*" (Forman); . . . (III. iii. 1) Forman conjectures to be Eldon. The passages of Wordsworth referred to are (*Note*, below) *The Excursion*, VIII. and (VI. xxxvi.) *Thanksgiving Ode on the Battle of Waterloo*, first version. Shelley put footnotes to the poem as follows:—

Prologue 36 The oldest scholiasts read—

A dodecagamic Potter.

This is at once more descriptive and more megalophonous,—but the alliteration of the text had captivated the vulgar ear of the herd of later commentators.

- I. ii. 3 To those who have not duly appreciated the distinction between *Whale* and *Russia* oil, this attribute might rather seem to belong to the Dandy than the Evangelic. The effect, when to the windward, is indeed so similar, that it requires a subtle naturalist to discriminate the animals. They belong, however, to distinct genera.

- III. viii. 2 One of the attributes in Linnæus's description of the Cat. To a similar cause the cater-wauling of more than one species of this genus is to be referred ; — except, indeed, that the poor quadruped is compelled to quarrel with its own pleasures, whilst the biped is supposed only to quarrel with those of others.
- viii. 5 What would this husk and excuse for a virtue be without its kernel prostitution, or the kernel prostitution without this husk of a virtue ? I wonder the women of the town do not form an association, like the Society for the Suppression of Vice, for the support of what may be called the " King, Church, and Constitution " of their order. But this subject is almost too horrible for a joke.
- xvi. 1 This libel on our national oath, and this accusation of all our countrymen of being in the daily practice of solemnly asseverating the most enormous falsehood, I fear deserves the notice of a more active Attorney-General than that here alluded to.
- VI. xi. 5 *Vox populi, vox dei.* As Mr. Godwin truly observes of a more famous saying, *of some merit as a popular maxim, but totally destitute of philosophical accuracy.*
- xvi. 2 Quasi, *Qui valet verba* : — i. e. all the words which have been, are, or may be expended by, for, against, with, or on him. A sufficient proof of the utility of this history. Peter's progenitor who selected this name seems to have possessed a *pure anticipated cognition* of the nature and modesty of this ornament of his posterity.
- xxv. 5 A famous river in the New Atlantis of the Dynastophylic Pantisocratists.
- xxvi. 5 See the description of the beautiful colors produced during the agonizing death of a



number of trout, in the fourth part of a long poem in blank verse, published within a few years. That poem contains curious evidence of the gradual hardening of a strong but circumscribed sensibility, of the perversion of a penetrating but panic-stricken understanding. The author might have derived a lesson which he had probably forgotten from these sweet and sublime verses.

This lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,  
Taught both by what she<sup>1</sup> shows and what  
conceals,

Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.

VI. xxxviii. 6 It is curious to observe how often extremes meet. Cobbett and Peter use the same language for a different purpose : Peter is indeed a sort of metrical Cobbett. Cobbett is, however, more mischievous than Peter, because he pollutes a holy and now unconquerable cause with the principles of legitimate murder ; whilst the other only makes a bad one ridiculous and odious. If either Peter or Cobbett should see this note, each will feel more indignation at being compared to the other than at any censure implied in the moral perversion laid to their charge.

#### CONTEMPORARY RECORDS : —

Mrs. Shelley's Note (1839<sup>2</sup>, p. 253): "A critique on Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* reached us at Leghorn, which amused Shelley exceedingly and suggested this poem. I need scarcely observe that nothing personal to the Author of *Peter Bell* is intended in this poem. No man ever admired Wordsworth's poetry more ; — he read it perpetually,

<sup>1</sup> Nature.

and taught others to appreciate its beauties. This poem is, like all others written by Shelley, ideal. He conceived the idealism of a poet — a man of lofty and creative genius — quitting the glorious calling of discovering and announcing the beautiful and good, to support and propagate ignorant prejudices and pernicious errors ; imparting to the unenlightened, not that ardor for truth and spirit of toleration which Shelley looked on as the sources of the moral improvement and happiness of mankind ; but false and injurious opinions, that evil was good, and that ignorance and force were the best allies of purity and virtue. His idea was that a man gifted even as transcendently as the Author of *Peter Bell*, with the highest qualities of genius, must, if he fostered such errors, be infected with dulness. This poem was written, as a warning — not as a narration of the reality. He was unacquainted personally with Wordsworth or with Coleridge (to whom he alludes in the fifth part of the poem), and therefore, I repeat, his poem is purely ideal ; — it contains something of criticism on the compositions of these great poets, but nothing injurious to the men themselves.

“No poem contains more of Shelley’s peculiar views, with regard to the errors into which many of the wisest have fallen, and of the pernicious effects of certain opinions on society. Much of it is beautifully written — and though, like the burlesque drama of Swellfoot, it must be looked on as a plaything, it has so much merit and poetry — so much of *himself* in it, that it cannot fail to interest greatly, and by right belongs to the world for whose instruction and benefit it was written.”

[The “critique” mentioned in this note refers, it is thought, to the two reviews in Hunt’s *Examiner* on Reynolds’s and on Wordsworth’s *Peter Bell*, as stated in the note prefixed to the text, to which there is little to add. The date of composition, “the latter days of October,” is given by Dowden, ii. 289. Forman reprints, besides Reynolds’s satire, *Peter Bell* vs. *Peter Bell* from Reynolds’s *The Fancy*, 1820. See, also, note on the *Sonnet to Wordsworth*.]

Shelley (from Florence) to Hunt, November 2, 1819 :

"Now, I only send you a *very heroic* poem, which I wish you to give to Ollier, and desire him to print and publish immediately, you being kind enough to take upon yourself the correction of the press — not, however, with my name; and you must tell Ollier that the author is to be kept a secret, and that I confide in him for this object as I would confide in a physician or lawyer, or any other man whose professional situation renders the betraying of what is entrusted a dishonor. My motive in this is solely not to prejudge myself in the present moment, as I have only expended a few days in this party squib, and, of course, taken little pains. The verses and language I have let come as they would, and I am about to publish more serious things this winter; afterwards, that is next year, if the thing should be remembered so long, I have no objection to the author being known, but *not now*. I should like well enough that it should both go to press and be printed very quickly; as more serious things are on the eve of engaging both the public attention and mine. . . . She [Mary] has written out, as you will observe, *my Peter*." Garnett, *Relics*, pp. 103, 104.

Shelley (from Florence) to Ollier, December 15, 1819: "Pray what have you done with *Peter Bell*? Ask Mr. Hunt for it, and for some other poems of a similar character I sent him to give you to publish. I think *Peter* not bad in his way; but perhaps no one will believe in anything in the shape of a joke from me." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 123.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, May 14, 1820: "If *Peter Bell* be printed (you can best judge if it will sell or no, and there would be no other reason for printing such a trifle) attend, I pray you, particularly to completely concealing the author; and for *Emma* read *Betty* as the name of *Peter's* sister. Emma, I recollect, is the real name of the sister of a great poet who might be mistaken for *Peter*." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 139.

#### THE WITCH OF ATLAS

*The Witch of Atlas* is the second title in the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. The Dedication is there omitted, and was first published in 1839<sup>1</sup>, together with a note explaining it. A

MS. exists at Boscombe, and a transcript by Mrs. Shelley, found among the Hunt papers, is in the possession of Mr. Townshend Mayer.

NOTES showing the state of other texts and including minor variations beyond what has been already noted. 1839<sup>1,2</sup> agree, and follow 1824, except where variations are noted.

- vi. 1 *cameleopard* all editions and transcript.
- xv. 1 *lay* omit, transcript.
- xxi. 1 *own* omit, 1839<sup>1,2</sup>.
- xxvi. 1 *sat* 1824, Rossetti.
- xxxvi. 5 *swelled lightly* Forman, Dowden.
- xxxvii. 3 *lightenings* 1839<sup>1,2</sup>, Rossetti, Dowden.
- xlvi. 1 dele comma 1839<sup>1,2</sup>, Forman, Dowden; *flashed*, — Rossetti. *Sunlight*, 1824, Rossetti.
- lxxv. 3 *Around the anvils* Forman conj.

#### CONTEMPORARY RECORDS : —

Mrs. Shelley's Note, 1839<sup>1</sup>, iv. 50–53 : “ We spent the summer at the baths of San Giuliano, four miles from Pisa. These baths were of great use to Shelley in soothing his nervous irritability. We made several excursions in the neighborhood. The country around is fertile, and diversified and rendered picturesque by ranges of near hills and more distant mountains. The peasantry are a handsome, intelligent race, and there was a gladsome sunny heaven spread over us, that rendered home and every scene we visited cheerful and bright. During some of the hottest days of August, Shelley made a solitary journey on foot to the summit of Monte San Pelegrino — a mountain of some height, on the top of which there is a chapel, the object, during certain days in the year, of many pilgrimages. The excursion delighted him while it lasted, though he exerted himself too much, and the effect was considerable lassitude and weakness on his return. During the expedition he conceived the idea and wrote, in the three days immediately succeeding to his return, *The Witch of Atlas*. This poem is peculiarly characteristic of his tastes — wildly fanciful, full of brilliant

imagery, and discarding human interest and passion, to revel in the fantastic ideas that his imagination suggested.

"The surpassing excellence of *The Cenci* had made me greatly desire that Shelley should increase his popularity, by adopting subjects that would more suit the popular taste than a poem conceived in the abstract and dreamy spirit of *The Witch of Atlas*. It was not only that I wished him to acquire popularity as redounding to his fame ; but I believed that he would obtain a greater mastery over his own powers, and greater happiness in his mind, if public applause crowned his endeavors. The few stanzas that precede the poem were addressed to me on my representing these ideas to him. Even now I believe that I was in the right. Shelley did not expect sympathy and approbation from the public ; but the want of it took away a portion of the ardor that ought to have sustained him while writing. He was thrown on his own resources and on the inspiration of his own soul, and wrote because his mind overflowed, without the hope of being appreciated. I had not the most distant wish that he should truckle in opinion, or submit his lofty aspirations for the human race to the low ambition and pride of the many, but I felt sure that if his poems were more addressed to the common feelings of men, his proper rank among the writers of the day would be acknowledged ; and that popularity as a poet would enable his countrymen to do justice to his character and virtues ; which, in those days, it was the mode to attack with the most flagitious calumnies and insulting abuse. That he felt these things deeply cannot be doubted, though he armed himself with the consciousness of acting from a lofty and heroic sense of right. The truth burst from his heart sometimes in solitude, and he would write a few unfinished verses that showed that he felt the sting. . . .

"I believed that all this morbid feeling would vanish, if the chord of sympathy between him and his countrymen were touched. But my persuasions were vain ; the mind could not be bent from its natural inclination. Shelley shrunk instinctively from portraying human passion, with its mixture of good and evil, of disappointment and disquiet. Such opened again the wounds of his own heart, and he loved to

shelter himself rather in the airiest flights of fancy, forgetting love and hate and regret and lost hope, in such imaginations as borrowed their hues from sunrise or sunset, from the yellow moonshine or paly twilight, from the aspect of the far ocean or the shadows of the woods ; which celebrated the singing of the winds among the pines, the flow of a murmuring stream, and the thousand harmonious sounds which nature creates in her solitudes. These are the materials which form *The Witch of Atlas* ; it is a brilliant congregation of ideas, such as his senses gathered, and his fancy colored, during his rambles in the sunny land he so much loved."

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, January 20, 1821 : " I send you *The Witch of Atlas*, a fanciful poem, which, if its merit be measured by the labor which it cost, is worth nothing." *Shelley Memorials*, 135.

Shelley (from Pisa) to Ollier, February 22, 1821 : " Do not add *The Witch of Atlas* to that peculiar piece of writing [Julian and Maddalo] ; you may put my name to *The Witch of Atlas* as usual." *Shelley Memorials*, p. 154.







the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased by 50% (Mental Health Foundation, 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of people with mental health problems, and a number of initiatives have been developed to improve the lives of people with mental health problems. The Mental Health Act 1983 was amended in 1996 to give people with mental health problems more control over their own lives. The Mental Health Act 1996 was introduced to give people with mental health problems more control over their own lives. The Mental Health Act 1996 was introduced to give people with mental health problems more control over their own lives.

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